



**The
Young Alaskans
On The Missouri**
EMERSON HOUGH



To Lyle Patter
from Vernon

Dec. 25, 1922.



THE YOUNG ALASKANS
ON THE MISSOURI



Books by
EMERSON HOUGH

THE YOUNG ALASKANS
YOUNG ALASKANS ON THE TRAIL
YOUNG ALASKANS IN THE ROCKIES
YOUNG ALASKANS IN THE FAR NORTH
YOUNG ALASKANS ON THE MISSOURI

Harper & Brothers
Publishers

THE YOUNG ALASKANS ON THE MISSOURI

By
EMERSON HOUGH

Author of

"YOUNG ALASKANS IN THE ROCKIES"

"YOUNG ALASKANS IN THE FAR NORTH"

ETC.



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

YOUNG ALASKANS ON THE MISSOURI

Copyright, 1922
By Harper & Brothers
Printed in the U. S. A.

First Edition

I-W

956
H838
young

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	FOLLOWING LEWIS AND CLARK.....	1
II.	READY FOR THE RIVER.....	9
III.	"ADVENTURER, OF AMERICA"	17
IV.	THE EARLY ADVENTURERS	23
V.	OFF UP THE RIVER	36
VI.	THE LOG OF THE "ADVENTURER"	41
VII.	THE GATE OF THE WEST.....	49
VIII.	HO! FOR THE PLATTE!	59
IX.	SHIPWRECK	67
X.	AT THE PLATTE	73
XI.	AMONG THE SIOUX	83
XII.	THE LOST HUNTER	89
XIII.	GETTING NORTH	100
XIV.	IN DAYS OF OLD	115
XV.	AMONG THE MANDANS	128
XVI.	OLD DAYS ON THE RIVER.....	144
XVII.	AT THE YELLOWSTONE	155
XVIII.	WHERE THE ROAD FORKED.....	168
XIX.	AT THE GREAT FALLS	187
XX.	READY FOR THE RIVER HEAD.....	201
XXI.	THE PACK TRAIN	210
XXII.	AT THE THREE FORKS.....	226
XXIII.	SUNSET ON THE OLD RANGE.....	235
XXIV.	NEARING THE SOURCE	246
XXV.	BEAVERHEAD CAMP	262
XXVI.	THE JUMP-OFF CAMP	276
XXVII.	THE UTMOST SOURCE	294
XXVIII.	SPORT WITH ROD AND REEL.....	302
XXIX.	THE HEAD OF THE GREAT RIVER.....	310
XXX.	SPORTING PLANS	327
XXXI.	AMONG THE GRAYLING	340
XXXII.	AT BILLY'S RANCH	349
XXXIII.	HOMEWARD BOUND	371

ILLUSTRATIONS

THEY TURNED AWAY FROM THE GREAT FALLS OF THE ANCIENT RIVER WITH A FEELING OF SADNESS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THEY SAW HIM SCRAMBLE UP THE BANK, LIE FOR AN INSTANT HALF EXHAUSTED, AND THEN COME RUNNING DOWN THE SHORE TO THEM	<i>Facing p. 70</i>
BEFORE ANYONE COULD HELP HIM HE WAS FLUNG FULL LENGTH, AND LAY MOTIONLESS	" 216
JESSE SUDDENLY STOOPED, THEN ROSE WITH AN EXCLAMATION	" 264

THE YOUNG ALASKANS ON THE MISSOURI

CHAPTER I

FOLLOWING LEWIS AND CLARK

“WELL, sister,” said Uncle Dick, addressing that lady as she sat busy with her needlework at the window of a comfortable hotel in the city of St. Louis, “I’m getting restless, now that the war is over. Time to be starting out. Looks like I’d have to borrow those boys again and hit the trail. Time to be on our way!”

“Richard!” The lady tapped her foot impatiently, a little frown gathering on her forehead.

“Well, then?”

“Well, you’re always just starting out! You’ve been hitting the trail all your life. Wasn’t the war enough?”

“Oh, well!” Uncle Dick smiled humorously as he glanced at his leg, which extended before him rather stiffly as he sat.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I should think it was enough!" said his sister, laying down her work.

"But it didn't last!" said Uncle Dick.

"How can you speak so!"

"Well, it didn't. Of course, Rob got in, even if he had to run away and smouch a little about how old he was. But he wasn't through his training. And as for the other boys, Frank was solemn as an owl because the desk sergeant laughed at him and told him to go back to the Boy Scouts; and Jesse was almost in tears over it."

"All our boys!"

"Yes! All our boys. The whole country'd have been in it if it had gone on. America doesn't play any game to lose it."

"Yes, and look at you!"

Uncle Dick moved his leg. "Cheap!" said he. "Cheap! But we don't talk of that. What I was talking about, or was going to talk about, was something by way of teaching these boys what a country this America is and always has been; how it never has played any game to lose it, and never is going to."

"Well, Richard, what is it this time?" His sister began to fold up her work, sighing, and to smooth it out over her knee. "We've just got settled down here in our

ON THE MISSOURI

own country, and I was looking for a little rest and peace."

"You need it, after your Red Cross work, and you shall have it. You shall rest. While you do, I'll take the boys on the trail, the Peace Trail—the greatest trail of progress and peace all the world ever knew."

"Whatever can you mean?"

"And made by two young chaps, officers of our Army, not much more than boys they were, neither over thirty. They found America for us, or a big part of it. I call them the two absolutely splendidest and perfectly bulliest boys in history."

"Oh, I know! You mean Lewis and Clark! You're always talking of them to the boys. Ever since we came to St. Louis——"

"Yes, ever since we came to this old city, where those two boys started out West, before anybody knew what the West was or even where it was. I've been talking to our boys about those boys! Rather I should say, those two young gentlemen of our Army, over a hundred years ago—Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark."

His sister nodded gravely, "I know."

"What water has run by here, since 1804, in these two rivers, the Mississippi and the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Missouri! How the country has grown! How the world has changed! And how we have forgotten!

"That's why I want to take them, even now, my dear sister, these young Americans, over that very same old trail—not so long and hard and full of danger now. Why? Lest we forget! Lest our young Americans forget! And we all are forgetting. Not right.

"You see? Because this old town of St. Louis was then only a village, and we just had bought our unknown country of France, and this town was on the eastern edge of it, the gate of it—the gate to the West, it used to be, before steam came, while everything went by keel boat; oar or paddle and pole and sail and cordelle. Ah, Sis, those were the days!"

"Think of the time it must have taken!"

"Think of the times they must have been!"

"But now one never hears of Lewis and Clark. We go by rail, so much faster. As for going up-river by steamboat, I never heard of such a thing!"

"But the boys have. I caught Jesse, even, pondering over my Catlin, looking at the buffalo and Indian pictures."

"I never heard of Catlin."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Of course not. Well, he came much later than my captains, and was an artist. But my captains had found the way. Rob and Frank know. They've read the worked-over *Journals* of Lewis and Clark. Me, I've even seen the originals. I swear those curious pages make my heart jump to this very day, even after our travels on the soil of France just now—France, the country that practically gave us our country, or almost all of it west of the Missouri, more than a hundred years ago. She didn't know, and we didn't know. Well, we helped pay the rest of the price, if there was anything left back, at Château Thierry and in the Argonne."

His sister was looking at the stiffened leg, and Uncle Dick frowned at that. "It's nothing," said he. "Think of the others."

"And all for what?" he mused, later. "All for what, if it wasn't for America, and for what America was meant to be, and for what America was and is? So, about my boys—what d'ye think, my dear, if they wandered with me, hobbling back from the soil of old France, over the soil of the New France that once lay up the Big Muddy, yon—that New France which Napoleon gave to make New America? Any harm about that, what? . . .

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Lest we forget! Lest all this America of ours to-day forget! Eh, what?"

By this time his sister had quite finished smoothing out the work on her knee. "Of course, I knew all along you'd go somewhere," she said. "You'd find a war, or anything like that, too tame! Will you never settle down, Richard!"

"I hope not."

"But you'll take the boys out of school."

"Not at all. To the contrary, I'll put them in school, and a good one. Besides, we'll not start till after school is anyhow almost out for the spring term. We'll just be about as early as Lewis and Clark up the Missouri in the spring."

"You'll be going by rail?"

"Certainly not! We'll be going by boat, small boat, little boat, maybe not all boat."

"A year! Two years!"

Uncle Dick smiled. "Well, no. We've only got this summer to go up the Missouri and back, so, maybe as Rob did when he enlisted for eighteen, we'll have to smouch a little!"

"I'll warrant you've talked it all over with those boys already."

Uncle Dick smiled guiltily. "I shouldn't wonder!" he admitted.

ON THE MISSOURI

"And, naturally, they're keen to go!"

"Naturally. What boy wouldn't be, if he were a real boy and a real American? Our own old, strange, splendid America! What boy wouldn't?"

"Besides," he added, "I'd like to trace that old trail myself, some day. I've always been crazy to."

"Yes, crazy! Always poring over old maps. Why do we need study the old passes over the Rockies, Richard? There's not an earthly bit of use in it. All we need know is when the train starts, and you can look on the time card for all the rest. We don't need geography of that sort now. What we need now is a geography of Europe, so we can see where the battles were fought, and that sort of thing."

"Yes? Well, that's what I'm getting at. I've just a notion that we're studying the map of Europe—and Asia—to-day and to-morrow, when we study the old mountain passes of the Rockies, my dear."

"And," he added, firmly, "my boys shall know them! Because I know that in that way they'll be studying not only the geography, but the history of all the world! When they come back, maybe they—maybe you—will know why so many boys now are asleep in the Argonne

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

hills and woods in France. Maybe they'll see the old Lewis and Clark trail extending on out across the Pacific, even."

"You're so funny, Richard!"

"Oh, I reckon so, I reckon so! The old Crusaders were funny people, too—marching all the way from England and France, just to take Jerusalem. But look what a walk they had!"

CHAPTER II

READY FOR THE RIVER

UNCLE DICK made his way to the library room, where he found his three young companions on so many other trips of adventure.¹

"So there you are, eh?" he began. "Rob, I see you're poring over some old book, as usual. What is it—same *Journal* of Lewis and Clark?"

"Yes, sir," said Rob McIntyre looking up, his eyes shining. "It's great!"

"And here's John Hardy with his maps!" exclaimed Jesse Wilcox. "Look it! He's got a notion he can do a map as well as Captain William Clark."

"He's something of a born map maker, then!" responded Uncle Dick. "There was one of the born geniuses of the world in map making. What a man he'd have been in our work—running preliminary surveys! He just naturally knew the way across country, and he

¹ See Vol. I, *The Young Alaskans*; Vol. II, *The Young Alaskans on the Trail*; Vol. III, *The Young Alaskans in the Rockies*; Vol. IV, *The Young Alaskans in the Far North*.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

just naturally knew how to set it down. On hides, with a burnt stick—on the sand with a willow twig—in the ashes with a pipe stem—that's how his maps grew. The Indians showed him; and he showed us."

"I've often tried to tell," said Rob, "which was the greater of those two men, Clark or Lewis."

"You never will," said his uncle. "They were the two greatest bunkies and buddies of all the world. Clark was the redhead; Lewis the dark and sober man. Clark was the engineer; Lewis the leader of men. Clark had the business man in him; Lewis something more—the vision, the faith of the soul as much as the self-reliance of the body. A great pair."

"I'll say they were!" assented John. "My! what times!"

"And what a country!" added Jesse, looking up from his map.

"Yes, son; and what a country!" His uncle spoke seriously.

"But now, fellows," he added, "about that little *pasear* of ours—that slide of a couple of thousand miles this summer, up the little old Missouri to the Rockies and down the river again—thing we were talking of—what do you say?"

ON THE MISSOURI

"Oh, but we can't!" said Jesse.

"Oh, but I'll bet we can!" said John, who caught a twinkle in Uncle Dick's eye.

"Yes, and we will!" said Rob, also noting his smile.

"Yes," said Uncle Dick. "I've just come from talking with the acting commanding officer. She says that on the whole she gives consent, provided I don't keep you out of school."

"It took Lewis and Clark two years," demurred John. "But they were out of school—even though poor Will Clark hadn't learned much about spelling. They didn't have to get back by the first week in September."

"And we don't want to scamp it," said thoroughgoing, sober Rob.

"But we don't want to motor it," countered John.

"I'll tell you," said Jesse Wilcox, the youngest and smallest of the three. "We can go by power boat, most way, anyhow. That's not scamping it, all things considered, is it?"

"By Jove!" said Uncle Dick, and again: "By Jove! An idea!"

"But about how big a boat do you think this particular family, just after the war, can afford?"

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"We could easy buy a riverman's fishing skiff," said Jesse, sagely; "twenty feet long and narrow bottomed, but she floats light and runs easy and can carry a load."

"But that's not a motor boat, son," said Uncle Dick. "Do you think we can row to the head of the Missouri and get back by September?"

"Outboard motor," said Jesse, calmly.

"Hah! As though that could stem the June rise on the Muddy!"

"Two outboard motors, one on each side the stern, rigged on a cross plank," said Jesse, never smiling. "Besides, a head sail when the wind is right behind. And a rope if we got a head wind. And the oars and paddles, too. We've paddled hours. Every little."

"We could get gas easy," said John. "Lots of towns all along, now."

"Easy as shooting fish," drawled Jesse. "I'm making a model of a new flying ship now, though it isn't all done. I can run one of those motors."

"What say, Rob?" Uncle Dick turned to the oldest of the three, and the one of soberest judgment, usually.

"I shouldn't wonder if it's the answer, sir," said Rob. "How many miles a day must we average?"

ON THE MISSOURI

"As many as we can. Lewis and Clark and their big boat did eight or ten, sometimes fifteen or twenty—the average was about nine miles a day. It took them all summer and fall to get to the Mandans. That's above Mandan, South Dakota—a thousand miles or so, eh?"

"Just sixteen hundred and ten miles, sir," said Rob, "according to their figures. Just about nine miles a day, start to finish of that part of the run, here to the Mandans—though the modern estimates only call it fourteen hundred and fifty-two miles."

"If we can't beat that average I'll eat the boat," said Jesse, gravely.

"Well," said Uncle Dick, beginning to bite his fingers, as he often did when studying some problem, "let's see. A good kicker might do two or three miles an hour, by picking out the water. Two good kickers might put her up to five, good conditions. Some days we might do forty miles."

"And some days, on long reaches and the wind O.K., we'd do forty-five or fifty," said Rob. "Of course, we can't figure on top notch all the way. We've got to include bad days, break-downs, accidents, delays we can't figure on at home, but that always get in their work somehow. Look at all our own other trips."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Depends on how many hours you work," said Frank. "We don't belong to the long-shoremen's union, you know. Some days we might travel twelve hours, if we'd nothing else to do. And I don't think there's much fishing, and it would be off season for shooting, most of the time."

"I'll tell you," said Uncle Dick, after a time. "I doubt if we could do it all the way by boat by September. But I'll see your teacher, here in St. Louis, where we're all going to winter this year, and arrange with him to let you study outside for the first few weeks of the fall term in case we don't get back. You'll have to work while you travel, understand that."

The boys all agreed to this and gave their promise to do their best, if only they could be allowed to make this wonderful trip over the first and greatest exploring trail of the West.

"It can perhaps be arranged," said Uncle Dick.

"You mean, it has been arranged!" said Rob. "You've spoken to our school principal!"

"Well, yes, then! And you can cut off a little from the spring term, too. But it's all on condition that you come back also with a knowledge of that much history, additional to your regular studies."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Oh, agreed to that!" said Rob; while John and Jesse began to drop their books and eagerly come closer to their older guide and companion.

"What'll we need to take?" asked John. "We can't live on the country as we did up North."

"Cut it light, young men. One week's grub at a time, say. The little tent, with a wall, and the poles along—we can spread it on the boat if we like."

"Not the mosquito tent?" asked Jesse.

"No, not after the seasoning you chaps have had in the North. Some mosquitoes, but not so many for us old-timers. Take bars, no head nets. We're not tenderfeet, you see."

"A blanket, a quilt, and an eiderdown quilt each?" suggested John.

"You'll not! Did Lewis and Clark have eiderdown?"

"No, but they had buffalo robes!"

"And so have we!" Uncle Dick laughed aloud in triumph. "I found three in an old fur trader's loft here, and—well, I bought them. He'd forgotten he had them—forty years and more. A blanket and a quilt and a robe each, or Jesse and John to divide the biggest robe—and there we are!"

"A tarp to go over all," said Rob.

"Yes. And our regular mess kit. And the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

usual wool scout clothes and good shoes and soft hat. That's about all. Two trout rods, for the mountains. One shotgun for luck, and one .22 rifle—no more. It'll make a load, but Jesse's river ship will carry it. Nasty and noisy, but nice, eh?"

"It'll be fine!" said Jesse. "Of course, we take our maps and books and papers, in a valise?"

"Yes. I'll have a copy of the original *Journal*."

"And we'll always know where we are?" thus John. "That is," he added, "where they were?"

"Yes," said Uncle Dick, reverently enough. "As near as we can figure on the face of a country so changed. And we'll try to put in all the things they saw, try to understand what the country must have been at that time? Is that agreed?"

Each boy came up and stood at attention. Each gave the Boy Scout's salute. Uncle Dick noted with a grim smile the full, snappy, military salute of the American Army which Rob now gave him. He returned it gravely and courteously, as an officer does.

CHAPTER III

"ADVENTURER, OF AMERICA"

IT was on a morning in early spring that our four adventurers found themselves at the side of their boat, which rested on the bank of the great Missouri River, not far above its mouth. Their little tent stood, ready for striking, and all their preparations for the start now were made. Rob stood with a paint pot and brush in hand, at the bow of the boat.

"She's dry, all right, by now, I think," said he. "If we put a name on the stern board the paint could dry without being touched. What shall we christen her?"

"Call her 'Liberty,' " suggested Jesse, or, say, 'America.' "

"Fine, but too usual. Give us a name, John."

"Well, I say, 'Columbia,' because we are headed for the Columbia, the same as Lewis and Clark."

"Too matter-of-fact! Give us a jollier name."

"Well, give us one yourself, Rob," said Uncle Dick, "since you're so particular."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"All right! How'd 'Adventurer, of St. Louis,' do?"

"Not so bad—not so bad. But to Lewis and Clark, St. Louis was only one point of their journey, important as it was."

"I'll tell you," broke in Jesse, the youngest. "Call her '*Adventurer, of America.*' You can paint it all on, if you use small letters for part, like the steamboats."

"That's the name!" said Rob. "Because that was a great adventure that Lewis and Clark were taking on; and it was all for America—then and now. Hard to live up to. But, you see, we're only following."

"What do you say, Uncle Dick?" asked John.

"I like it," replied the latter. "It will do, so paint it on, Rob; and all of you be careful not to smudge it. It'll be dry by to-morrow morning, for this fantail rides high above the motors."

"Finish drying and packing the dishes now, and let's be off when Rob gets done. We're exactly one hundred and eighteen years to a day and an hour after the boats of Lewis and Clark at this very place—only, Lewis went across by land to St. Charles, and saved a little of his time by meeting the boats there."

ON THE MISSOURI

"And that was the real start, wasn't it, Uncle Dick?" demanded Frank.

"In a way, yes. But over yonder, across the Mississippi, on the river Du Bois, in the American Bottoms, Will Clark had built the cabins for the men's winter quarters. And long before that, Meriwether Lewis had left Washington after saying good-by to Mr. Jefferson. And then he stopped awhile near where Pittsburgh is, to get his boats ready to go down the Ohio, and get men. And then he picked up Clark where Louisville now is. And then he left the Ohio River and crossed by horseback to the Army post across from here, to get still more men for the expedition—soldiers, you see, good hardy men they were, who knew the backwoods life and feared nothing. So after they got all of the expedition together, they made winter quarters over yonder, and in the spring they came over here, and the great fleet of three boats and forty-five men started off on their adventure.

"Of course, Rob, you know the incident of the Three Flags?"

Rob nodded.

"That was a great day, when the American army of the West, twenty-nine men in buckskin, under this young captain of thirty years,

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

marched into St. Louis to take possession of the Great West for America. And St. Louis in twenty-four hours was under the flags of three great countries, Spain, France, and the United States.

"You see—and I want you to study these things hard some day—Napoleon, the Emperor of France, was at war. This Western region belonged to Spain, or she said it did, but she ceded it to Napoleon; and then when he didn't think he could hold it against Great Britain, he sold it to us.

"Now this had all been country largely settled by French people who had come down long ago from the Great Lakes. They didn't think Spain had exercised real sovereignty. Now we had bought up both claims, the Spanish and the French; so we owned St. Louis all right, going or coming.

"So, first the Spanish flag over the old fort was struck. Next came the French. And the French loved the place so much, they begged they might have their flag fly over it for at least one night. Captain Lewis said they might, for he was a courteous gentleman, of course. But orders were orders. So in the morning the flag of France came down and the Flag of the United States of America was raised,

ON THE MISSOURI

where it has been ever since, and I think will always remain. Those events happened on March 9 and 10, 1804.

"So there they were, with the Flag up over a country that nobody knew anything at all about. Then they started out, on May 14 of that year, 1804. And since that time that unknown America has grown to be one of the richest, if not the very richest, land in the world. And since that time, so much has the world changed, I have seen three flags flying at the same time over a city in France—those of France, of Great Britain, and of America, and all at peace with one another, though all at war together as allies in a cause they felt was just. May they float together now! Aye, and may Spain have no fear of any of the three."

"Are you about done with the painting, Rob?" concluded Uncle Dick.

"Yes, sir, finished."

"Look it!" said John.

Jesse was coming down from the tent, unrolling something wrapped around a stick. "Well now, well now," he drawled, "where shall I put this?"

"Company, 'tenshun!" barked Uncle Dick. "Colors pass!" And all snapped again into the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

salute while Jesse fastened the Flag into the bow of the *Adventurer, of America*.

"Now we're about all ready," said Jesse, gravely. And he also stood at the salute which good Scouts give the Flag, as a little band of strong men in buckskin had done, not far away, more than a hundred years ago.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARLY ADVENTURERS

“WELL, are you all set, fellows?” demanded Uncle Dick, at last, turning to his young companions and taking a look over the dismantled camp.

“Just about, sir,” answered Rob, who always was accepted as the next officer to Uncle Dick in command.

“Load her down by the head all you can,” said the latter, as the boys began storing the remaining duffle aboard.

“Why?” asked Jesse, who always wanted to know reasons.

“I’ll tell you. This water is so roily you can’t see into it very deep. It has a lot of snags and sweepers and buried stuff. Now, if she rides with bows high, she slips farther up, say, on a sunken log. If her bow is down a little, she either doesn’t slide on, or else she slips on over.”

“Oh! I hadn’t thought of that.”

Uncle Dick grinned. “Well, maybe I wouldn’t, either, if I hadn’t been reading my

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Lewis and Clark *Journal* all over again. They speak of that very thing. Oh, this is a bad old river, all right. Those men had a hard time."

"But, sir," answered Rob, "if we load too far down by the bow, our stern motors won't take hold so well. We've got to bury them."

"That's true, their weight throws the bow very high. I doubt if we can do much better than have an even keel, but if she'll kick all right, keep her down all you can in front, for if we ever do ride a log, we'll strip off the propellers, and maybe the end of the boat, too. Better be safe than sorry, always."

"They didn't have as good a boat as ours, did they?" John spoke with a good deal of pride as he cast an eye over the long, racy hull of the *Adventurer*, whose model was one evolved for easy travel upstream under oars.

"Well, no, but still they got along, in those days, after their own fashion. You see, they started out with three boats. First was a big keel boat, fifty-five feet long, with twenty-two oars and a big square sail. She drew three feet of water, loaded, and had a ten-foot deck forward, with lockers midship, which they could stack up for a breastworks against Indian attacks, if they had to. Oh, she was quite a ship, all right.

ON THE MISSOURI

“Then they had a large red perogue—must have been something like ours, a rangy river skiff, built of boards; certainly not like the little cypress dugouts they call ‘peewoogs’ in Louisiana.

“Now they had a third boat, the ‘white peroque,’ they spell it. It was smaller, carrying six oars. The red skiff carried the eight French *voyageurs* ——”

“We ought to have all their names, those fellows,” said Frank.

“Well, write them down—I’ve got the *Journal* handy. Here Captain Clark gives them, as they were set into squads, May 26th, far up the river. You see, they were a military party—there were twenty-nine on the official rolls as volunteers, not mentioning Captains Lewis and Clark, or York, Captain Clark’s negro body servant, who ‘all traveled on the big boat:

Orderly Book: Lewis.

Detachment Orders
May 26th, 1804.

The Commanding Officers Direct, that the three Squads under the command of Sergt^s. Floyd, Ordway and Pryor, heretofore forming two messes each, shall untill further orders constitute three messes only, the same being altered and organized as follows (viz:)

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Sergt. Charles Floyd

Privates

Hugh McNeal

Patric Gass

Reuben Fields

John B. Thompson

John Newman

Francis Rivet and

(French)

Joseph Fields

Sergt. John Ordway

Privates

William Bratton

John Collen

Moses B. Reed (Soldier)

Alexander Willard

William Warner

Silas Goodrich

John Potts and

Hugh Hall

Sergt. Nathaniel Pryor

Privates

George Gibson

George Shannon

John Shields

John Collins

Joseph Whitehouse

Peter Wiser

Peter Crusat and

Francis Labuche

Patroon, Baptist

Deschamps

Engagés

Etienne Mabbauf

Paul Primant

Charles Hebert

Baptist La Jeunesse

Peter Pinant

Peter Roi and

Joseph Collin

Corp^l. Richard

Warvington

Privates

Robert Frazier

John Boleye

John Dame

Ebinezer Tuttle and

Isaac White

The Commanding Officers further direct that the messes of Sergts. Floyd, Ordway, and Pryor shall untill further orders form the crew of the Batteaux; the Mess of the Patroon La Jeunesse will form the permanent crew of the red Peroque; Corp^l. Warvington's men forming that of the white Peroque.

ON THE MISSOURI

"There it all is, just as Captain Lewis wrote it, capitals and all. How many would it be, Rob—not forgetting the two captains and the negro York, Clark's body servant, who is not mentioned in the list?"

"I make it forty-one names here in the messes," answered Rob, after counting, "or forty-four with the others added. That does not include Chaboneau or the Indian girl, Sac-ágawea, whom they took on at Mandan."

"No, that's another list. It usually is said there were forty-five in the party at St. Louis. You see the name 'Francis Rivet and (French).' That would make forty-five if French were a man French and not a Frenchman. But they always spoke of the voyagers as 'the French.' Anyhow, there's the list of May 26, 1804."

"Maybe they lost a man overboard somewhere," suggested John.

"Not yet. They had a deserter or two, but that was farther up the river, and they caught one of these and gave him a good military trimming and expulsion, as we'll see later. But this I suppose we may call the actual party that found our Great West for us. They are the Company of Volunteers for Northwestern Discovery."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

The three boys looked half in awe as they read over the names of these forgotten men.

"Yes. So there they were," resumed Uncle Dick, gravely. "And here in the *Journal* the very first sentence says the party was 'composed of robust, healthy, hardy young men.' Well, that's the sort I've got along with me, what?"

"But Uncle Dick—Uncle Dick—" broke in Jesse, excitedly, "your book is all wrong! Just look at the way the spelling is! It's awful. It wasn't that way in the copies we had."

"That's because this is a real and exact copy of what they really did write down," said Uncle Dick. "Yours must have been one of the rewritten and much-edited volumes. To my mind, that's a crime. Here's the real thing.

"Listen!" he added, suddenly, holding the volume close to him. "Would you like to know something about those two young chaps, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, and what became of their *Journals* after they got home? You'd hardly believe it."

"Tell us," said Rob.

Uncle Dick opened his book on his knee, as they all sat on the rail of the *Adventurer*.

"They were soldiers, both of them, fighting men. Lewis had some education, and his mind

ON THE MISSOURI

was very keen. He was the private secretary of President Thomas Jefferson, but Jefferson says he was not 'regularly educated.' He studied some months in astronomy and other scientific lines, under Mr. Andrew Ellicott, of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with the special purpose of fitting himself to lead this expedition. Mr. Ellicott had experience in astronomical observation, and practice of it in the woods, the record says.

"Lewis was better educated than Clark, who was four years the older—thirty-three—while Lewis was twenty-nine. He spells better than Clark, who is about as funny as Josh Billings, though he certainly spelled his best. Of one thing you can be sure, whenever you see anything of the *Journal* spelled correctly, it is false and spurious—that's not the original, for spelling was the one thing those two fellows couldn't do.

"They used to make field notes, rough, just as you boys do. Clark had an elk-skin cover to his book—and that little book disappeared for over one hundred years. It was found in the possession of some distant relatives, descendants, by name of Voorhis, only just about ten years ago.

"At night, by the camp fire, the two officers

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

would write out their field notes, for they had to report very fully to President Jefferson. Sometimes one wrote, sometimes the other, and often one would copy the other's notes. Only the originals could make all that plain. And, alas! not all the original work is known to exist.

"No one seems to have valued the written record of that wonderful trip. When the young men got to St. Louis on their return, they did try to make a connected book of it all, but no one valued that book, and they couldn't get a publisher—think of that! But at last they did get an editor, Mr. Nicholas Biddle, he was, of Philadelphia.

"That poor man waded through over one million words of copy in the 'notes' he got hold of at last! But by then President Jefferson was getting anxious about it. By then, too, poor Lewis was dead, and Clark was busy at St. Louis as Indian agent. And Will Clark never was a writer. So, slip by slip, the material faded and scattered.

"Biddle saved the most of it, boiling it down quite a lot. Then he gave it over to Paul Allen, a newspaper man, also of Philadelphia, who did more things to it, getting it ready for the press. This book did not get published until

ON THE MISSOURI

February, 1814, five years after Lewis died and eight years after they got back. By that time a lot of people had had a hack at it. A lot more have had a hack since then; but Biddle is the man who really saved the day, and Allen helped him very much.

“Of late, inside of the last twenty or thirty years, many editions of that great *Journal* have been issued. The best is the one that holds closest to Clark’s spelling. That’s the best. And I’ll tell you it took genius, sometimes, to tell what he meant, for that redhead spelled by ear.

“Look here—and here. ‘Catholic’ he spells ‘Carthlick’; ‘Loups’—the Indians—he calls ‘Loos.’ He spells ‘gnat’ ‘knat,’ or spells ‘mosquito’ ‘musquitr,’ and calls the ‘tow rope’ the ‘toe rope’—as indeed Lewis did also. He spells ‘squaw’ as ‘squar’ always; and ‘Sioux’ he wrote down as ‘Cuouex’—which makes one guess a bit—and the ‘Osages’ are ‘Osarges,’ the Iowas, ‘Ayauways.’ His men got ‘deesantary’ and ‘tumers,’ which were ‘dificcelt to cure.’ He gives a dog ‘som meet,’ and speaks of a storm which ‘seased Instancetaneously.’ He does a lot of odd things with big words and little ones, as spelling ‘cedar’ ‘seeder’—at least the simplest way! As to jerked meat, I suppose it was as

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

good if spelled 'jurked,' or even 'jirked,' and a 'tirkey' is as good as turkey, perhaps.

"Plain and matter-of-fact, he was, that Red-head Chief, as the Indians called him; yet very little escaped him or his friend, and both could note the beauty of nature. See here, where Clark writes on June 20th (his capitals are odd as his spelling): 'at Sunset the atmesphier presented every appearance of wind, Blue and White Streeks centiring at the Sun as she disappeared and the Clouds Situated to the S. W. Guilded in the most butiful manner.'

"Can't you see the sunset? And can't you see Will Clark, his tongue on one side, frowning as he wrote by the firelight?

"And Lewis wasn't so much better. For instance, he spelled squirrel as 'squirril,' where Clark spells it 'squarl,' and he spells hawk 'halk,' and hangs a 'Meadle' on a chief's neck. Oh, this old *Journal* certainly is a curious thing!"

Jesse threw himself down on the sand in a fit of laughter. "I could do better'n that my own self," said he, at last. "Why, what sort of people were they, couldn't spell any better than that?"

"Maybe you could," said Uncle Dick, "but you are not to laugh at William Clark, who was

ON THE MISSOURI

a great man. He did all that writing after a hard day's work, in a wild and strange country. I suppose it was hard for him to write, but he did it, and here it is.

"Oddly enough, Clark wrote a very fine, clear hand—a gentleman's handwriting. The *Journals* are always done in pen and ink. Clark did most of the work in the *Journal*, but Lewis at times took a hand. Between them they kept what might be called the log of the voyage.

"They worked, all of that party. The oarsmen had to work under a taskmaster all day. Some one had to hunt, for they only had about a ton of cargo, all told, and they only had \$2,500 to spend for the whole trip out and back, and to feed forty people two years. And at night the commanders made Gass and Ordway and Floyd and Whitehouse keep journals, too; and Pryor and Frazier did a bit of the same, like enough. They had to cover everything they saw.

"So that is how we got this wonderful *Journal*, boys—one of the simplest and most manly books ever written. As I said, it was long forgotten and came near being ruined.

"The book of Patrick Gass got out first, and it had many publishers on both sides the ocean—though, of course, it had to be rewritten a

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

great deal. Up to 1851 there had been fifteen real and fake Lewis and Clark books printed, in English, French, and German; and there are about a dozen books with Sergeant Patrick Gass as the 'author.'

"They had no cameras in those days, but those men brought out exact word pictures of that land and its creature inhabitants. The spelling we must forget—that day was different and schools were rare. But good minds and bodies they surely had. They were not traders or trappers—they were explorers and adventurers in every sense of the word, and gentlemen as well.

"But now," concluded Uncle Dick, "that'll do for the story of the *Journal*. We've got it with us, and will use it right along. We're all ready, now? Well, let's be off, for now I see the wind is with us, and it's even more than William Clark started with when his three boats left the Wood River and started up the Missouri. He said they had a 'jente brease.'

"Off we go—on the greatest waterway in all the world, and on the trail of the greatest explorers the world has ever known."

"Now then," commanded Rob, laying hold of the rail. "Heave—o!" The others also pushed. The good ship *Adventurer* swung free

ON THE MISSOURI

of the sand and lay afloat. They sprang in. Uncle Dick steadied her with the oars. Jesse and John went ahead to trim ship. Rob gave a couple of turns to the flywheels of the two outboard motors and adjusted his feet to the special steering gear. The doubled motors began their busy sput-sput-sput! Like a thing of life the long craft, *Adventurer, of America*, turned into the current of the great Missouri, the echoes of the energetic little engines echoing far and wide.

CHAPTER V

OFF UP THE RIVER

"SHE'S riding fine, sir," called Rob to Uncle Dick, over the noise of the two little propellers that kept the gunwales trembling. "I can head her square into the mid current and buck her through!"

Uncle Dick smiled and nodded. "It's going to be all right! She rides like a duck. Spread that foresail, Frank, you and Jesse. We'll do our six miles an hour, sure as shooting! Haul that foresail squarer, Jesse, so she won't spill the wind. Now, Rob, keep her dead ahead."

"How far did they go each day?" demanded Jesse, "and how often did they eat?"

They all broke out in a roar of laughter over Jesse's appetite.

"They ate when they could," answered Uncle Dick, "for they had their hands full, working that big scow upstream. She was loaded heavy, and they often had to drag her on the line. When the line broke, as it did several times, she'd swing into the current and there'd be trouble to pay.

ON THE MISSOURI

"How far did they go? Well, that's really hard to say. They usually set down the courses and distances on the bends. For instance, here is the first record of that sort, May 15th. 'S^b' means starboard, right hand side going up, and 'L^b' means larboard, to the left."

"Course and Distance assending the Missourie Tuesday May 15.

Course	M ^{ls}	
West	1-0—	To p ^t on S ^t Side
N 80°W	2-0—	" " " " "
N 11°W	2- $\frac{1}{2}$ —	" " " " "
N 20°W	1- $\frac{1}{2}$ —	" " " L ^{bd} "
S 10°W	1- $\frac{1}{2}$ —	" " " S ^t "
S 22°W	1-0—	" " " " "

9- $\frac{1}{2}$

"We'll not try to keep our own courses, and we'll have to guess at our distances except as we can estimate it from average speed, which is what they also did. I suppose it seemed a long way. Patrick Gass says it was three thousand and ninety-six miles to the head of the river. Anyhow, they didn't make it as soon as we shall."

They ran on steadily, both motors firing perfectly and the sun bright overhead, while the fresh breeze back of them still held fair for most of the bends. They made St. Charles by

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

noon, as had been predicted, but did not pause, eating their lunch aboard as they traveled.

"Our captains didn't do this," said Rob. "As near as I can learn, they camped and cooked on shore. And they certainly got plenty of game."

"I know!" said Jesse, his mouth full of bread and marmalade. "Deer and turkey all along in here, then."

"Sure!" added John. "Thirty deer, four bear, and two wolves in the first six weeks."

Uncle Dick sighed. "Well, we'll have to live on rolls and marmalade, and if Jesse's appetite holds we'll have to make a good many towns for supplies. More's the pity, there's a good town now about every ten miles or so—two dozen towns in the first two hundred and fifty miles."

"Aw now!" said Jesse. "Aw now! I guess a fellow can't help getting hungry. Maybe we can catch some fish, anyhow."

"Gass said they did," nodded John. "They got a lot of fine catfish, and I think Patrick Gass must have liked them, way he talks. He says, 'We are generally well supplied with catfish, the best I have ever seen.'"

"What kind of a grub list did they have?" inquired Jesse; and John was able to answer,

ON THE MISSOURI

for he found the page in the *Journal*, which was close at hand on a box top, so it could be consulted at any time.

"They didn't have any marmalade or preserves, or fruit or acid of any kind, and they must have relied on the hunt. They had four bags of 'parchmeal,' which I suppose was parched corn ground—the old frontier ration, you know. That was about twenty-eight bushels in all, with some eighteen bushels of 'common' and twenty-two bushels of hominy. Then they had thirty half barrels of flour, and a dozen barrels of biscuit, a barrel of meal, fifty bushels of meal, twenty-four bushels of Natchez hulled corn, four barrels of other hulled corn, and one of meal. That was their cereal list.

"They only had one bag of coffee, and one each of 'Beens & pees,' as Clark spells them, and only two bags of sugar, though eight hundred and seventy pounds of salt."

"Not much sweets," grumbled Jesse. "How about the grease list?" Jesse was rather wise about making up a good, well-balanced grub list for a camping trip.

"Well," answered John, "they had forty-five hundred pounds of pork, a keg of lard, and six hundred pounds of 'grees,' as he calls it.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Not so much; and they ran out of salt in a year, and out of flour, too, so they didn't have any bread for months. They had some stuff spoiled by getting wet."

"They had some trade stuff for the Indians, and tools of all sorts, and other weapons and ammunition. They had sun glasses and an air gun and instruments for latitude and longitude. They were travelers, all right."

"Lay her a half north, fifty-seven degrees west, and full steam ahead!" sang out Uncle Dick. "Cut this big bend and take the wind on the labbord quarter, Jesse. I'll promise you, if our gas holds out, we'll get somewhere before dark. The *Adventurer, of America* is a mile eater, believe me!"

CHAPTER VI

THE LOG OF THE "ADVENTURER"

"ONE thing sure," said Rob, after a long silence, toward the close of the afternoon, "this isn't any wilderness now. Look at the fields and settlements we've passed. There's a town every ten miles."

"Well, I don't think it was all wild, even when Lewis and Clark went through," John replied to him. "People had been all through here. The *Journal* keeps on mentioning this creek and that—all the names were already on the country."

"Shall we get as far as Charette to-day, Uncle Dick?" asked Jesse.

"Hardly, this country has changed a lot in a hundred years and I don't know just where we are. I'm only guessing, doing dead reckoning on our motor speed. But we ought to see the place I've got in mind, before plumb dark."

"See what, Uncle Dick? What is it?"

"Never mind. I'll tell you if we make it."

However, Uncle Dick was shrewd in his map work and his guessing. Toward dark the boys

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

began to get anxious as the shadows fell along the deep, powerful river, but they had no sign to land until it was well after sunset. Then Uncle Dick began to whistle cheerfully.

"All right, Rob," he called. "Hard a-lee! Get across. That creek on the right is the Femme Osage. There were forty families settled there, six miles up the river, and one of those farmers was—who do you think?"

"I know!" exclaimed John. "It was Daniel Boone! I've read about his moving in here from Kentucky."

"Right you are, son! He had a Spanish land grant in here and lived here till 1804. He died in 1820, at the town called Femme Osage, as you know.

"Well now, here we are! In under the rocks, Rob—so! Now quick, Jesse, make fast at the bow!"

"Well, what do you know!" exclaimed Jesse. "Regular cave, and everything!"

"Yes," smiled his uncle, "a regular cave and all. Lucky to hit it so well and to find it still doing business—at least part way—after a hundred years!"

They scrambled up the bank to the opening of the cavern which made back into the bold rocky shore, finding the interior about twelve

ON THE MISSOURI

feet wide and running back for forty feet, with a height of some twenty feet. It was blackened with smoke in places, and many names were cut in the rock.

"Hard run up the swift chutes to get here," said Uncle Dick, "but I'm glad we made it. This old cave was called the 'Tavern,' even before Lewis and Clark, and all the river men used to stop here. Quite homey, eh?"

"We are lucky to have done in a day what it took Lewis and Clark nine hard days to do. They made only nine miles the last day, and found the water 'excessively swift.' Well, so did we; but here we are."

With the swiftness born of many nights in camp together, the four now unpacked the needful articles, not putting up any tent, but spreading it down on the floor of the cave. Their fire lit up the rocks in a wild and picturesque manner as they sat near, cooking and eating their first meal of the actual voyage up the great Missouri.

"They got a deer that day," said Rob, poring over the *Journal*, "I expect about their first deer."

Rob was turning over the pages on ahead. "Hah!" said he. "The men didn't always take care of the grub; here it says, 'Lyed corn and

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Grece will be issued, the next day Poark and flour, and the following, Indian meal and Poark, according to this Rotiene till further orders. No Poark will be issued when we have fresh meat on hand!" "

"You listen, now, Jesse. With breakfast bacon at sixty cents a pound, and your appetite, we'll have to go after meat. Get out that throw line of yours and see if we can't hang a catfish by morning. Here's a piece of beef for bait."

Jesse scrambled down the shore and threw out his line, with a rock for sinker, while the others finished making ready the beds.

"Jolly old place," ventured John, "though a little hard for a bed. What you looking at, Rob?"

"I was trying to find if the old Indian images were left, that used to be scratched or painted on the walls. Clark says the *voyageurs* and Indians were superstitious about this place. I think caves are always spooky places."

Soon they all felt tired and began to unroll the beds. A screech owl made a tremulous, eerie note, but even Jesse only laughed at that.

They had breakfast before the mist was off the water, and before the cooking was begun Jesse called out from below:

ON THE MISSOURI

"Hey, there! Wait for me! I've got the breakfast right here! Call in the lyed corn and pork. Here's a catfish, four pounds, anyhow!"

"Clean him, Jess," called Rob, "and cut him up small enough to fry."

Jesse did so, and soon the slices were sizzling in the pan.

"Well, anyhow," commented their leader, "though not as good as venison, it's wild game, eh? And our way has always been to live off the country all we could without breaking laws."

"What changes, from then till now!" said Rob. "It was spring and summer when they went up this river, but they killed deer, turkeys, elk, buffalo, antelope, and wild fowl—hundreds—all the time. Now, all that's unlawful."

"And impossible. Yes, they lived as the Indians lived, and they killed game the year round. Now, about all we can do for a while will be to eat the trusty catfish."

"One thing has not changed," their leader added, a little later, "and that is the current along the rock faces. Just above is what Clark called 'The Deavels race ground'—a half mile that will try your motors, Rob. The big keel boat got in all sorts of trouble that day, whirl-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

ing around, getting on bars, breaking her line and all that. The expedition came near getting into grief—men had to go overboard and steady her, and they were swimming, poling, rowing, and tracking all that day.”

Indeed, the great river seemed disposed to show the young travelers that her prowess had not diminished. They had a hard fight that day in more than one fast chute, and twice dragged the propellers on bars which they did not see at all. Uncle Dick used the oars three or four hours that day, and Jesse, the boatman, spread his foresail to gain such added power as was possible. In this way they made very good time, so that by late evening they reached the mouth of the Gasconade, which comes in from the left from the hill country. They got a good camp near the mouth, with abundance of wood. Jesse was so lucky as to take two fine wall-eyed pike, here called jack salmon, on his set line, as well as two catfish. They let the latter go, as they had enough for the day, the wall-eyes proving excellent.

“Now we’re beginning to get into deer!” said Rob. “Here George Shannon killed a deer, and Reuben Fields got one the next day. And all the time, as you no doubt remember, we’ve been meeting canoes coming down from

ON THE MISSOURI

the Omahas and Osages and Pawnees and Kansas, loaded down with furs!"

"I remember perfectly," asserted John, solemnly. I can see them going by right now! Pretty soon we pick up old man Dorion, coming down from the Sioux, and hire him to go back as an interpreter for us."

"Could catch a lot of catfish and 'jurk' the meat, the way Captain Clark did venison," said Jesse, at length.

According to their usual custom when on the trail, they were off by sunup, the exhaust of the double motors making the wooded shore echo again. They made their third encampment at the mouth of a stream which they took to be that called Good Woman River in the *Journal*—a name no longer known on their map.

"Whew!" complained Uncle Dick, as he got out and stretched his legs. "This is cramping me as bad as the trenches in the Argonne. You fellows'll 'do me in,' as the British used to say, if I don't look out! How far do you think we've come in the three days, Rob?"

"Let's see. I figure about one hundred and ninety to two hundred miles, that's all! What Lewis and Clark needed was our boat and a few outboard kickers. It took them till June 7th, twenty-three days, to get to this point.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

We've gained, you might say, three weeks on their time."

"Yes, but they got three bears at this camp, and we've got nothing! We don't dare kill even a squirrel, though I'm sure we could get some sort of game in this rough country not far back." John spoke ruefully.

"Don't kick, John," advised Jesse, sagely. "I'll take care of you. Besides, look at the big help the wind was to-day. Clark says he had only a 'jentle breese' in here."

"Or words to that effect," smiled Rob. "The main thing is, we travel many times faster than they possibly could. Even so, she's a long trail ahead."

"All we know is that we'll get through!" said John. "We always have."

"We're discovering romance," said Uncle Dick. "We're discovering America, too. Jesse, take down your Flag from the bow staff—don't you know the Flag must never be allowed to fly after sunset?"

They were now lying in their blankets in their tent, on a wind-swept point. "I wonder if Captain Clark took down the flag. Now, I wonder ——"

But what Jesse wondered was lost, for soon he was asleep.

CHAPTER VII

THE GATE OF THE WEST

NEARLY a week had passed since the last recorded camp of the crew of the *Adventurer*—spent in steady progress across the great and beautiful state of Missouri and its rich bottom lands, its many towns, its farms and timber lands and prairies. Many an exclamation at the wild beauty of some passing scene had been theirs in the constant succession of changing river landscapes.

Their own adventures they had had, too, with snags and sweepers and the dreaded “rolling sands” over which the current boiled and hissed ominously; but the handlers of the boat were well used to bad water on their earlier trips together, in the upper wildernesses of the continent, so they made light of these matters.

“I don’t believe that Patrick Gass put down all the bears they got,” said Jesse. “Clark says they got a lot, sometimes two a day, and they ‘jurked’ the meat, the same as vension. Gee! I wish I’d been along!”

Rob smiled. “I expect the hunters had a

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

hard time enough. They had to work through heavy weeds and vines in these bottoms, and if they got back in very far they had to guess where the boat would be. And even Lewis complains of ticks and mosquitoes and heavy going ashore."

"I believe things poisoned Clark worse than they did Lewis, he was so fair skinned," said John. "One of his regular entries all along was, 'Mosquitrs (or musketos or muskeeters) very troublesome.'"

"Poor Clark!" smiled Rob. "What with rubbing 'musquitr' bites and spelling in his daily report, he must have had a hard time. He had another regular entry, too, as you said, Jesse, that about the 'jentle brease.' I don't know how many ways he spelled it, but he seems to have had no confidence at all in his own spelling. Look here: on June 1st he has a 'jentle brease,' and on June 20th a 'jentle breese'; but not content when he got it right, he calls it a 'gentle Breeze' the next time, then drops back to 'gentle breeze' on July 21st. He repeats that on August 12th, the next raising it to 'gentle Breeze'; and then it's a 'gentle breeze,' a 'jentle Breeze,' 'gentle breeze,' and 'gentle Brease'—till he gets perfectly irresponsible, up the river!"

ON THE MISSOURI

"What a funny man!" snickered Jesse, once more.

"He didn't do it to be funny," said Rob. "Once I asked a kid cow puncher to make a horse pitch some more for me, so I could make a photo of it; and he said, 'Why, I didn't make him pitch—he just done that hisself.' Well, I guess that's how to account for Clark's spelling—he 'just done that hisself.'"

Uncle Dick had not been paying much attention to the boys just then, but was watching the smoke clouds ahead. Passing trains whistled loudly and frequently. The shores became more populated.

"Two miles more and we'll round to full view of Kansas City, young men," said he. "We've crossed the whole and entire state of Missouri, three hundred and ninety miles—from one great city to another great one.

"St. Louis—Kansas City! Each in her day has been the Gate to the West. In 1847, Independence, over to the left, was going back, and even the new boat landing of Westport was within the year to be called Kansas City. Then she was the Gate indeed, and so she has remained through various later sorts of transportation.

"When St. Louis laid down the oar and

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

paddle, Kansas City took up the ox whip. When the railroads came, she was sitting on the job.

"You've seen one old town site of New Franklin, opposite Boonville, halfway across the state; and now I want you to study this great city here, hardly more than threescore years and ten of age—just a man's lifetime. Picture this place as it then was—full of the ox teams going west——"

"Oh, can't we go over the Oregon Trail, too—next year, Uncle Dick?" broke in John.

"Maybe. Don't ask me too many questions too far ahead. Now, think back to the time of Lewis and Clark—not a settlement or a house of a white man above La Charette, and not one here. To them this was just the mouth of the Kansas, or 'Kansau,' River, and little enough could they learn about that river. Look at the big bluffs and the trees. And yonder were the Prairies; and back of them the Plains. No one knew them then.

"As you know, they had been getting more and more game as they approached this place. Now the deer and bears and turkeys fairly thronged. Patrick Gass says, 'I never saw so much sign of game in my life,' and the *Journals* tell of the abundance of game killed—Clark

ON THE MISSOURI

speaks of the deer killed the day they got here, June 26th, and says, 'I observed a great number of Parrot quetts this evening.' That Carolina parrakeet is mentioned almost all the way across Kansas by the Oregon Trail men, and it used to be thick in middle Illinois. All gone now—gone with many another species of American wild life—gone with the bears and turkeys and deer we didn't see. You couldn't find a parrakeet at the mouth of the 'Kanzas' River to-day, unless you bought it in a bird store, that's sure.

"But think of the giant trees in here, those days—sycamores, cottonwoods, as well as oaks and ash and hickories and elms and mulberries and maples. And the grass tall as a man's waist, and 'leavel,' as they called it. Is it any wonder that Will Clark got worked up over some of the views he saw from high points on the river bends? Those, my boys, were the happy days—oh, I confess, Jesse, many a time I've wished I'd been there my own self!"

"How do you check up on the distances with Clark? How long did it take them to get this far?"

"Just forty-three days, sir," replied Jesse, the youngest of them all, who also had been keeping count.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Yes—around seven miles a day! We've done seven miles an hour, many a time. Where they took a week we'll take a day, let us say. From here to Mandan, North Dakota, where they wintered, is more than fourteen hundred miles by river, and they took about one hundred and twenty days to it—averaging only nine and a half or ten miles a day of actual travel in that part of the river. Clark fails once or twice to log the day's distance. Gass calls it sixteen hundred and ten miles from the start to Mandan—I make it about fifteen hundred and fifty, with such figures as I find set down. The River Commission call it fourteen hundred and fifty-two. Give us fifty miles a day for thirty days, and that would be fifteen hundred miles—why, we're a couple of hundred miles beyond Mandan right now—on paper!

"But I never saw anything that ran by gas that didn't get its back up sometimes. Suppose we allow a month to get up to Mandan—bringing us there by June 22d—call it June 30th. How'd that do? Do you think we can make it—say forty-odd miles a day—or even thirty?"

"Sure we can!" said Jesse, stoutly.

"Yes—on paper!" repeated Uncle Dick.
"Well, there's many a sand bar between here

and Mandan, and many a long mile. Lewis and Clark did not get there until October 26th—four months from here. If we allow ourselves one month, we'll only have to go four or five times as fast as they did. I've known a flat bottom 'John boat' do forty miles a day on the Current River of Missouri with only one outboard motor; and that's a six-mile current, good and stiff. Let us not count our chickens just yet, but keep on plugging. I must say Rob is a wizard with the engines, this far, at least.

"And now, if we're done with the arithmetic ——"

"We're not," interrupted Jesse. "I've set down the fish I've caught this far, and it's three wall-eyes and twelve catfish. That's fifteen head of game against their thirty, about!"

"Oh! And you want to know, if a boy of your size could catch fifteen head of fish in eight days, how many could we all catch in thirty days? That's getting out of my depth, Jesse! I don't know, but I hope that the gasoline and the catfish both hold out, for they are our main staffs of life just now."

They ran up the left bluff of the river, mile after mile, under the edge of the great town whose chimneys belched black smoke, noting railway train after train, their own impudent

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

little motors making as much noise as the next along the water front. Many a head was turned to catch sight of their curious twin-screw craft, with the flag at its bow, and on the stern the name *Adventurer, of America*, but Rob paid no attention to this, holding her stiff into the current and heading in answer to Uncle Dick's signals.

At last they lay alongside a little landing to which a houseboat was moored, occupied by a riverman whom Uncle Dick seemed to know.

"How do you do, Johnson," said he, as the man poked his head out of the companionway. "You see we're here."

"And more'n I'd of bet on, at that!" rejoined the other. "I never expected ye could make it up at all. How long ye been—a month or so?"

"A week or so," replied Uncle Dick, carelessly, and not showing his pride in the performance of the party. "You see, we've got double engines and we travel under forced draught, with the stokers stripped to the waist and doing eight shifts a day."

"Like enough, like enough!" laughed Johnson, not crediting their run. "Well, what kin I do fer ye here?"

"Get our tanks filled. Unpack our boat and store the stuff on your boat so it can't be stolen.

ON THE MISSOURI

Overrun our engines and oil her up. Clean out the bilge and make her a sweet ship."

"When?"

"To-day. But we'll not start until to-morrow morning. I've got a few friends to see here, and my Company of Volunteers for North-western Discovery will like to look around a little. We'll stop at a hotel to-night. I'm trusting you to have everything ready for us by nine to-morrow morning."

"That's all right," replied Johnson. "I'll not fail ye, and I'll not let anything git losted, neither."

"I know that," said Uncle Dick. "By the way, Johnson, which is the best outfitting store in Westport?"

"As which, sir?"

"In Westport, or say Independence. We could walk down there if we had to. Not so far."

Old Johnson scratched his head. "Go on, Colonel, you're always havin' yer joke. I'm sure I don't know what ye mean by Indypendence, or Westport. But if you want to get up-town, the street cars is four blocks yan. Er maybe ye'd like a taxi?"

"No, nothing that goes by gas, for one day, anyhow, Johnson. Well, see to the things—

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the crew have got the batteau about unloaded, and it's about time for our mess to go ashore to the cook fire. Sergeant McIntyre, issue the lyed corn with the bear and vension stew to-night, and see that my ink horn and traveling desk are at hand!"

"Yes, sir, very good sir!" returned Rob, gravely. And without a smile the four stalked off up the stair, leaving Johnson to wonder what in the world they meant.

CHAPTER VIII

HO! FOR THE PLATTE!

UNCLE DICK excused himself from the party for a time in the evening, having some business to attend to. He left the three boys in their room at a hotel, declaring they all would rather sleep on the houseboat with Johnson.

"It's mighty quiet on this trip," said Jesse.

"Nothing happens?" said Rob, looking up from his maps and the *Journal* which he had spread on the table. "That's what the explorers thought when they got here! They wanted to start in killing buffalo, but there were no buffalo so close to the river even then. All our hunters got was deer; they lay here a couple of days and got plenty of deer, and did some tanning and 'jurking.' Clark says they took this chance to compare their 'instrimunts,' and also they 'suned their powder and wollen articles.'

"Clark killed a deer below here. Drewyer, one of the best hunters, had a fat bear and a deer, too. And Lewis killed a deer next day, so the party was in 'fine Sperrits.' "

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Oh, so would I be in fine 'sperrits' if I could kill a deer or so," grumbled Jesse. "Now look at us!"

"Well," went on Rob, "look at us, then. See here, what Clark says about it:

"The Countrey on each Side the river is fine, interspersed with Praries, on which immense herds of Deer is seen. On the banks of the river we observe number of Deer watering and feeding on the young willow, Several killed to-day. . . . The Praries come within a Short distance of the river on each Side, which contains in addition to Plumbs Raspberries &c, and quantities of wild apples, great numb^{rs} of Deer are seen feeding in the young willows and Earbargo on the Banks and on the Sand bars in the river."

"I didn't know that deer liked willow leaves," said John.

"I didn't, either, but here it is. And that was June 26th, when the grass was up. I've even known some naturalists to say that deer don't eat grass. We know they do.

"But what we want to get here is the idea that now the expedition was just coming out of the hills and woods into the edge of the Prairies. Across these Prairies and the Plains came big river valleys that led out West toward the Rockies. If all that had been hills and timber, no road ever would have got through. It was the big waterways that made the roads

ON THE MISSOURI

into all the wilderness; we certainly learned that up in the Far North, didn't we?

"So here was their crossroads of the waters, at old Independence, which now is Kansas City. Not much here, but a natural place for the Gate to the West.

"Clark had a good real-estate eye. He says:

"The Countrey about the mouth of this river is verry fine on each Side as well as north of the Missourie. A high Clift on the upper Side of the Kanzas $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile up, below the Kanzas the hills is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ Miles from the point on the North Side of the Missourie the Hills or high lands is Several Miles back. . . . The high lands come to the river Kansas on the upper Side at about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile, in full view, & a butifull place for a fort, good landing place.

"He couldn't spell much, or put in his punctuation marks, but he certainly had a practical eye. And I reckon the first beginnings of the city were right then, for the *Journal* says, 'Completed a strong redoubt or brestwork from one side to the other, of logs and Bushes Six feet high.' Yes, I suppose that was the first white building here at the Gate.

"It's pretty hard to find any new part of the world to-day. Yonder runs the Kaw, leading to the Santa Fe Trail—and I'll bet there's a thousand motor cars going west right now, a hun-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

dred times as many cars each day as there used to be wagons in a year!"

He closed his book for the time. "Maybe that's what Uncle Dick wanted us to get in our heads!" said he.

"Some country!" said Jesse; and both John and Rob agreed.

When their leader returned a little later in the evening, the boys told him what they had been doing.

"Fine!" he said. "Fine! Well, I've just telegraphed home that we're all right and that we're off for the Platte to-morrow, early."

"That's another old road to the Rockies," said Rob.

"One of the greatest—the very greatest, when you leave out boat travel. The Platte Valley led out the men with plows on their wagons, the home makers who stayed West. You see, our young leaders were only path-finders, not home makers."

"And a jolly good job they had!" said Jesse.

"Yes, and jolly well they did the job, son, as you'll see more and more."

John was running a finger over the crude map which he and Jesse had been making from day to day. "Hah!" said he. "Here's the big

ON THE MISSOURI

Platte Valley coming in, but no big city at the mouth."

"Oh yes, there is," corrected Uncle Dick. "Omaha and Council Bluffs you can call the same as at the mouth of the Platte, for they serve that valley with a new kind of transportation, that of steam, which did not have to stick to the watercourse, but took shorter cuts.

"It's odd, but our explorers seem even then to have heard of a road to Santa Fe. They also say the Kansas River is described as heading 'with the river Del Noird in the black Mountain or ridge which Divides the Waters of the Kansas, Del Nord, & Collarado.' No doubt the early French or the Indians confused the Kaw with the Arkansas.

"Enough! Taps, Sergeant! To bed, all of you," he concluded; and they were willing to turn in.

In the morning early they were at the dock, and were greeted by Johnson, who, sure enough, had the gasoline cans filled and most of the heavy supplies aboard. By eight-thirty they were chugging away again up the water front of the city, their Flag flying, so that many thought it was a government boat of some sort.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Jesse tried to write in his notebook, but did not make much of a success, owing to the trembling of the boat under the double power.

"He always says 'we set out and proceeded on,' " Jesse explained. "I was trying to write how the expedition left the mouth of the Kansas River."

"Look out for 'emence numbers of Deer on the banks,' now," sung out John, who had the *Journal* on a box top near by. "'They are Skipping in every derrection. The party killed 9 Bucks to-day!'"

"But no buffalo yet," said Rob.

"No, not till we get up around Council Bluffs—then we'll begin to get among them."

"And by to-morrow afternoon we'll be where they celebrated their first Fourth of July. It was along in here. They celebrated the day by doing fifteen miles—closing the day by another 'Discharge from our Bow piece' and an extra 'Gill of Whiskey.' I don't call that much of a Fourth!" John seemed disgusted.

"Well, maybe the soldiers didn't, for they had 'Tumers & Felons & the Musquitters were verry bad,'" he went on. "I don't think their grub list was right—too much meat and salt stuff. But from now on they certainly did get plenty of game—all kinds of it, bears, deer,

ON THE MISSOURI

elk, beaver, venison, buffalo, turkeys, geese, grouse, and fish. You see, Jesse, they got some of those 'white catfish' like the last one you caught—a 'channel cat,' I suppose we'd call it. And they ate wild fruit along shore. I think the hunters had better chance than the oarsmen.

"They saw elk sign not far above the Kansas River, but I don't think they got any elk till August 1st. Above there they got into the antelope, which they called 'goat,' and described very carefully. They sent President Jefferson the first antelope ever seen east of the Alleghanies. Then they got into the bighorn sheep, which also were altogether new, and the grizzly bear, which they called the 'white bear.' Oh, they had fun enough from here on north!"

"Yes, and did their work besides, and a lot of it," affirmed Uncle Dick. "But while we are comparing notes we might just as well remember they had some bad storms. I don't like the look of that bank of clouds."

They all noted the heavy ridges of black clouds to the west. The wind changed, coming down the river in squalls which tore up the surface of the water and threw the bow of the boat off its course.

"Steady, Rob! Slow down!" called out Uncle Dick, who had begun to pull the tarpaulin over

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the cargo. "I can't judge the water in this wind. *Look out, all!*"

Suddenly there came a jolt and a jar which drove them from their seats. The propellers had struck a sand bar and plowed into it. Caught by the wind, the bow of the boat swung around into the current. Careening, the lower rail went under and the water came pouring in.

CHAPTER IX

SHIPWRECK

HOLD her, boys!" called out Uncle Dick. "Overboard! Hold her up!"

Even as he spoke he had plunged overboard on the upstream side, throwing his weight on the rail. The water caught him nearly waist deep, for the treacherous bar shelved rapidly.

It was not so deep where Rob went in, but Jesse and John, thoughtlessly plunging in on the lower side, were swept under the boat, which all the strength of the other two could not hold back against the combined power of the current and the wind.

Without warning they were cast into an accident which in nine cases out of ten would have meant death to some or all of them.

The boat was filling fast, and the great weight of the outboard motors buried her stern, so she was about to swamp in midstream. Uncle Dick in horror saw the set faces of two of his young friends at the rail beyond him, their legs under the boat, which was swinging on them, their terror showing in their eyes.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

He made one grasp across the boat, and luckily caught Jesse's hand. Their combined weight held the boat down by the bow, and she swung downstream, half full but not sinking.

"Swim for it, John, as soon as we reach the island!"

The voice of Uncle Dick rose high and clear. A willow-clad island lay below, toward which the boat now was setting. He knew the boys all could swim, and they were all lightly dressed, with canvas sneakers and no coat.

"All right!" replied John, confidently, now getting his legs free. "I can make it." Indeed, it did not seem the boat could carry another pound. Rob was swimming on the upstream side, one hand on the stern. Keeping low in the water, they floated on down in the black squall of wind and rain which now came on them. Their course downstream was very rapid.

"Now, John!" Uncle Dick gave the word, and John, without one instant's hesitation, struck out for the island, now not over forty yards away over the choppy, rain-whipped water. His head was seen bobbing over the waves, but gaining distance. Uncle Dick hardly breathed as he watched.

The boat was lightened a little. Rob took a

ON THE MISSOURI

chance, climbed in over the stern, and, catching up a setting pole, began to reach for bottom on the upstream side. He caught it and, putting in all his strength, swung the bow across stream, repeating again and again, until the boat was not far back of John's bobbing head. Then all at once Uncle Dick gave a shout. His feet had struck bottom on the shelving sand once more. Between them they now could guide and drag the boat till they made a landing, with Jesse on top the cargo, only about fifty yards below where John was headed. They saw him scramble up the bank, lie for an instant half exhausted, and then come running down the shore to them. They all dragged at the water-logged boat until they had her ashore so she would hold.

"And that's that!" panted John, coolly and slangily enough.

Till then no one had spoken. Uncle Dick couldn't speak at first. He only drew Jesse and John to him, one to each arm, wet as they all were, and in the rain now pouring down. "Fine, boys!" said he.

"The closest squeak we've ever had," said Rob, at last. "Right here in the settlements! There's the city of Leavenworth just around the bend."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Close enough!" said Uncle Dick. "And my compliments to you all, every one. If it had been a lot of chaps less cool and ready, we'd none of us have been saved. Rob, who taught you to paddle on the up side when crossing a current?"

"I learned it of Moise Richard, on the Peace River, sir," replied Rob.

"Right! Most people try to hold her nose against the current by working on the lower side. Upstream is right—and I must say the setting pole saved the day. But, John, you'll never know how I dreaded to tell you to cast free and swim for it. I thought it was safest for you."

"Oh, that's nothing," said John. But at the same time he was very proud of his feat.

They were wet to the skin and the rain was cold, their boat was full of water and their stores wet. At last, surely, they had an adventure on their hands. But they were not downhearted over it at all.

"All hands lay to for camp!" called Uncle Dick.

They began to unload the heavier stuff, so they could cant the boat and spill the bilge water out of her. The tarpaulin was thrown over some willow bushes for a shelter, and



THEY SAW HIM SCRAMBLE UP THE BANK, LIE FOR AN INSTANT
HALF EXHAUSTED, AND THEN COME RUNNING DOWN
THE SHORE TO THEM



ON THE MISSOURI

under this they piled their grub boxes and dunnage rolls. The beds were all in watertight canvas bags, and so were their spare clothes, so matters might have been worse. The guns could be dried, and the tarpaulin had kept the lighter articles from washing away. In a little while they got the tent up, and then they folded the wet tarpaulin for a floor and hurried their outfit inside, damp but yet not ruined.

"Get some boughs to put inside," suggested their leader. "Get out that little forced-draught oil stove and let's see if we can dry out. It's going to be hard to get a fire on this island in this rain, for there's nothing but willows. They're wet. Get the little stove going and pull shut the flaps. When it gets a little warmer we'll open the bags and change our clothes. And as John would say, that'll be that! But it's only by mercy that we're here. You are right, Rob, this is the most serious accident we have ever had together."

"Let's open a can of soup, and issue an extra gill of tea," said Rob.

They broke into a roar of laughter. Inside of half an hour the little hut was steaming and they all were sitting on boxes eating their evening meal. The storm, which had culmi-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

nated in a fierce thunder gust, now was muttering itself away.

Jesse went out and brought in the Flag from its staff on the boat. "We'll have to dry her," he said. "She's silk, and fast colors."

"And I think my expeditionary force is all true blue!" added Uncle Dick, quietly.

In the night Jesse waked them all by suddenly crying out in a nightmare. Rob shook him awake.

"What's wrong, old top?" he asked.

"I guess I was scared," admitted Jesse, frankly, and pulled the covers over his head.

CHAPTER X

AT THE PLATTE

ON the morning following the storm the sun broke through the clouds with promise of a clear, warm day. Our *voyageurs* were astir early.

"Take it easy, fellows," counseled the leader. "We've got to 'sun our powder,' as our *Journal* would say. John, when you set down the day's doings in your own journal, make it simple as William Clark would. It's more manly. Well, here we are."

Rob looked ruefully at the wet willow thicket in which their camp was pitched. "We can get a few dead limbs," he said, "but, wet as things are now, we'd only smoke the stuff and not dry it much."

"Wait for the sun," advised John. And this they found it wise to do, not leaving the island until nearly noon.

"Morale pretty good!" said Uncle Dick. "John, set down, 'Men in verry high sperrits.' And off we go!"

They chugged up directly to the point, as

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

nearly as they could determine, where they had met the disaster of the previous day. "Keep leading a horse up to a newspaper and he'll quit shying at it," said Uncle Dick. "Find the very spot where we struck."

"There she is!" exclaimed Rob, presently. The boat stuck again and began to swing. But this time the setting pole held her bow firm, and, since there was no wind, a strong shove pushed her free without anyone getting overboard. They went on after that with greater confidence than ever, and Jesse began to sing the old canoe song of the voyagers, "*En roulant ma boule, roulant!*"

They paused at none of the cities and towns now, and only set down the rivers and main features, as they continued their steady journey day after day for all of a week. At the end of that time the increasing shallowness of the river, the many sand bars and the nature of the discolored, rolling waters, made them sure they were approaching the mouth of the great Platte River, which, as they knew, rose far to the west in the Rocky Mountains.

Here they went into a camp and rested for almost a day, bringing up their field notes and maps and getting a good idea of the country by

ON THE MISSOURI

comparing their records with the old journals of the great expedition.

"Bear in mind that, after all, they were not the first," said Uncle Dick. "They had picked up old Dorion, their interpreter, from a canoe away down in Missouri, and brought him back up to help them with the Sioux, where he had lived. Their bowman Cruzatte and several other Frenchmen had spent two years up in here, at the mouth of the Loup. There were a lot of cabins, Indian trading camps, one of them fifty years old, along this part of the river.

"But when they got up this far, they were coming into the Plains. New animals now, before so very long. They really were explorers, for there were no records to help them."

"You say they found new animals now," Rob began. "You mean elk, buffalo?"

"Yes. No antelope yet."

"They made the Loup by July 9th, above the Nodaway," said John, his finger in the *Journal*. "Two days later they got into game all right, for Drewyer killed six deer that day himself, and another killed one, so they had meat in camp.

"They made the Nemaha by July 14th, and I think that was almost the first time they got

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

sight of elk. Clark fired at one that day, but didn't get him. That was where he first wrote his name and date on a rock—he says the rock 'jucted out over the water.' I think that was near the mouth, on the banks of the Nishnabotna River, but I don't suppose a fellow could find it now, do you?"

"No. It never has been reported, like the two Boone signatures in Kentucky," replied Uncle Dick. "He only wrote his name twice—once up in Montana. But now, think how this new sort of country struck them. Patrick Gass says, 'This is the most open country I ever saw, almost one continued prairie.' What are you writing down, Jesse?"

"'Musquitors verry troublesome,'" grinned Jesse, watching a big one on his wrist. "I'll bet they were awful."

"And the men all had 'tumers and boils,' in spite of their 'verry high sperrits,'" broke in John, from the *Journal*. "And they gave Alexander Willard a hundred lashes and expelled him from the enlisted roll, for sleeping on sentinel post—which he had coming to him. But all the same, the *Journal* says that this party was healthier than any party of like size 'in any other Situation.' His main worry was these pesky 'musquitors.' He killed a deer,

ON THE MISSOURI

but they were so bad he found it 'Painfull to continue a Moment Still'!

"Here's something for you, Jesse!" he added, laughing. "One day in a 'fiew minits Cought 3 verry large Cat fish, one nearly white, a quort of Oile came out of the Surpolous fat of one of those fish.' And all the time they are mentioning turkeys and geese and beaver—isn't it funny that all those creatures then lived in the same place? On August 2d, Drewyer and Colter, two of the hunters, brought in the horses loaded with elk meat. But that was just above the Platte, nearer Council Bluffs."

"One thing don't forget," said Uncle Dick at this time. "All that hunting was incidental to those men. About the biggest part of their business was to get in touch with the Indian tribes and make friends with them. You'll see, they stuck around the mouth of the Platte quite a while, sending out word, to get the Indians in. The same day Drewyer and Colter got the elk the men brought in a 'Mr. Fairfong,' an interpreter, who had some Otoes and Missouri Indians. Then there were presents and speeches, and they hung some D.S.O. medals on a half dozen of the chiefs and told them to be good, or the Great Father at Washington would get them.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

“Well, that’s all right. But what I want you to notice is the camp at Council Bluffs. That wasn’t where the city of Council Bluffs, Iowa, is, but on the opposite side of the river, about twenty-five miles above Omaha—not far from Fort Calhoun. There was no Omaha then. I can remember my own self when Omaha was young. I used to shoot quail on the Elkhorn and the Papilion Creek, just above Omaha, and grand sport there was for quail and grouse and ducks all through that country then.

“But Lewis and Clark had a wide eye. They knew natural points of advantage, and they must have foreseen what the Platte Valley was going to mean before long. They say that Council Bluffs was ‘a verry proper place for a Trading Establishment and fortification.’ Trust them to know the ‘verry proper places’! Only, what I can’t understand is the note that it is ‘twenty-five days from this to Santafee.’ That’s a puzzler. The natural place of departure for Santa Fe was where Kansas City is, not Omaha. But, surely, they had heard of it, somehow.”

“Well,” said Rob, “we’re doing pretty well, pretty well. In spite of delays, we’re at the mouth of the Platte, sixteen days out, and they didn’t get there till July 21st. I figure three

ON THE MISSOURI

hundred and sixty-six miles to Kansas City, and two hundred and sixty-six miles to here, say six hundred and thirty-two miles for sixteen days—the river chart says six hundred and thirty-five miles. That keeps us pretty close to our average we set—over forty miles a day. We've got to boost that, though.

"Are we going to stop at Omaha, sir?" he added, rather anxiously.

"Not on anybody's life!" rejoined Uncle Dick. "Nice place, but we're a day late. No, sir, we'll skip through without even a salute to the tribes from our bow piece. We've got to get up among the Sioux. Dorion has been talking all the time about the Sioux. So good-bye for the present to the Platte tribes, the Pawnees, Missouris, and Otoes."

"Gee! I'd like to shoot something," said Jesse, wistfully. "Just reading about things, now!"

"Forget it for a while, Jess," smiled his uncle. "Just remember that we're under the eaves of two great cities, here at Plattsmouth. Take comfort in the elk and beaver sign you can imagine in the sand, here at the mouth of this river. It still is six hundred yards wide, with its current 'verry rapid roleing over Sands.'

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Two voyagers of the Lewis and Clark expedition had wintered here before that time, trapping—the beaver were so thick. Imagine yourself not far up the river and shooting at an elk four times, as Will Clark did—then not getting him. Imagine yourself along with that summer fishing party along this little old river, and getting upward of eight hundred fish, seventy-nine pike, and four hundred and ninety cats; and again three hundred and eighteen 'silver fish'—I wonder, now, if that really could have been the croppy? Lord! boy—what a time they had, strolling, hunting, fishing, exploring new lands, visiting Indians, having the time of their lives!"

"Let's be off," suggested Rob. And soon they were plugging along up the great river, threading their way among the countless bars and shoals.

"I can see the full boats coming down the Platte!" said Jesse, shading his eyes, "hide canoes, full of beaver bales, that float light! And there are the *voyageurs*, all with whiskers and long rifles and knives."

"Yes," said Uncle Dick, gravely. "And here are our men, tall, in uniform coats and buckskin leggings. See now"—and he reached for John's volume—"they let off the deserter,

ON THE MISSOURI

Moses Reed, very light. He only had to run the gantlet of the entire party four times—each man with nine switches—and get dropped from the rolls of the Volunteers!

“And here is where Captain Lewis, experimenting with some strange water he had found—with some cobalt and ‘isonglass’ in it—got very ill from it. His friend Clark says ‘Copperas and Alum is verry pisen.’ ”

“But when did they first find the buffalo?” demanded Jesse, fingering once more the little rifle which always lay near him in the boat. “Gee! now, I’d like to kill a buffalo!”

“All in due time, all in due time, Jess!” his leader replied. “My, but you are bloodthirsty! Wait now till August 23d, above Sioux City. You are Captain William Clark, with your elk-hide notebook inside your shirt front, and you have gone ashore and have killed a fat buck. And when you get back to the boat J. Fields comes in and says he has killed a buffalo, in the plain ahead; and Lewis takes twelve men and has the buffalo brought to the boat at the next bend; so you just make no fuss over that first buffalo, and set it down in your elk-hide book. And that same day two elk swam across the river ahead of the boat. And that same evening R. Field brought in two deer on a horse,

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

and another deer was shot from the boat; and they all saw elk standing on a sand bar, and several prairie wolves. And the very next day, don't you remember, you saw great herds of buffalo? Oh, now you're in the Plains! Everybody now is 'jurking meat.' What more do you want, son?"

"Aw, now!" said Jesse. "Well, anyway, we're about in town."

CHAPTER XI

AMONG THE SIOUX

“**N**OW we are leaving the Pawnees and passing into the Sioux country!” said Rob.

They were passing under the great railroad bridge which connected Council Bluffs, Iowa, with Omaha, Nebraska. The older member of the party nodded gravely. “And can’t you see the long lines of the white-topped covered wagons going west—a lifetime later than Lewis and Clark, when still there was no bridge here at all? Can’t you see the Mormons going west, with their little hand carts, and their cows hitched up to wagons with the oxen? Look at the ghosts, Rob! Hit her up. Let’s get out of here!”

“She’s running fine,” Rob went on. “Somehow I think this must be better water, above the Platte. You know, Lewis and Clark only averaged nine miles a day, but along in here for over two hundred miles they were beating that, doing seventeen and one-quarter, twenty and one-quarter, seventeen, twenty-two and one-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

half, seventeen and one-half, sixteen, seventeen, twenty and one-half, twenty and one-half, fifteen, ten and three-quarters, fifteen, ten—not counting two or three broken days. They seem to have got the hang of the river, somehow.”

“So have we,” nodded the other. “I’ll give you five days to make Sioux City.”

As a matter of fact, the stout little ship *Adventurer* now began to pick up on her own when they had passed that Iowa city, going into camp on the evening of June 4th well above the town. They purchased bread, poultry, eggs, and butter of a near-by farmer, and opened a jar of marmalade for Jesse, to console him for the lack of buffalo.

“It’s my birthday, too, to-day,” said Jesse. “I was born on the fourth day of June, fourteen years ago. My! it seems an awful long time.”

“Well, Captain Meriwether Lewis was not born on this day,” said his uncle, but his birthday was celebrated on this spot by his party, on August 18, 1805, and they celebrated it with a dance, and an ‘extra gill of whiskey.’ ”

“We’ll issue an extra gill of marmalade to the men to-night, and conclude our day of hard travel with a ‘Descharge of the Bow piece,’ just because it’s the Fourth of June. We’re

ON THE MISSOURI

hitting things off in great style now, and I'm beginning to have more confidence in gasoline."

"What made you want to get to this place, Uncle Dick?" asked John, his own mouth rather full of fried chicken.

"Because of the location—the mouth of the Sioux River, and at the lower edge of the great Sioux nation.

"Lewis and Clark tried to get peace among all these river tribes. They held a big council here, decorating a few more Otoes and Missouris, and telling them to make peace with the Omahas and the Pawnee Loups. The Sioux had not yet been found, though their hunting fires were seen all through here, and Lewis was very anxious to have his interpreter, Dorion, find some Sioux and bring them into council.

"It was at Captain Lewis's birthday party that the first and only casualty of the trip ensued. You remember Sergeant Floyd—he spelled worse than Clark, and Ordway worse than either—and his journal of some twenty thousand words, which he had kept till now? Well, he danced hard at the birthday party or at the Indian council, and got overheated, after which he lay down on the damp sand and got chilled. It gave him what the *Journal* calls a

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

'Biliose Chorlick,' and on the second day he died. He was buried on the bluffs below the town, at what still is called Floyd's Bluff, on the river they named after him, with military honors, and his grave long was known. His river still is known by his name, and it runs right into the town of Sioux City. The river washed the bank away under his grave, and in 1857 the remains were reburied, back from the river. That spot was marked by a slab in 1895, and a monument was put over it in May, 1901. I was a guest at the dedication of that obelisk. It was erected under the supervision of General Hiram Chittenden, the great engineer and great historian. It has a city park all of its own, and a marvelous landscape it commands.

"Well, poor Floyd had no memorial in those rude days, beyond a 'seeder post.' They did what they could and then they 'set out under a gentle Breeze and proceeded on.' "

"Well, but Dorion knew this country, then?" John began again, after a time.

"Yes," Rob was first to answer, "and that's what puzzles me—how they got such exact knowledge of a wild region. I suppose it was because they had no railroads and so had to know geography. The *Journal* says that the

ON THE MISSOURI

Sioux River heads with the St. Peter's (Minnesota) River, passing the head of the Des Moines; all of which is true. And it tells of the Red Pipestone quarry, on a creek coming into the Sioux. Clark puts down all those things and does not forget the local stuff. He says the 'Countrey above the Platte has a great Similarity'—which means the Plains as they saw them. And look, in John's book—here he says 'I found a verrey excellent froot resembling the read Current.' What was it—the Sarvice berry? He says it is 'about the Common hight of a wild Plumb.' Nothing escaped these chaps—geography, natural history, game, Indians, or anything else! They must have worked every minute of the day."

"I think his new berry was what we used to call the buffalo berry, in our railway surveys out West," said Uncle Dick. "It was bigger than a currant and made very fair pies.

"But now we've just begun to catch up with our story, for we were talking some time back where they first got a buffalo. That was about thirty or forty miles above here. By to-morrow night we'll camp in our fifth state since we left home—Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota."

"On our way!" sung out Rob. "We haven't

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

got any antelope yet, nor found a prairie dog, nor seen a single Sioux."

"Softly, softly!" smiled the older companion. "At least we're in the Sioux and antelope range."

Their little tent was pitched within a short distance of the river, and their fire made shadows along the wall of willows. At times they all fell silent, bringing to mind the wild scenes of this same country in a time which now began to seem not so long ago.

"My!" said Jesse, after a time, as he sat on his bed roll, his hands clasped before his knees. "Think of it! The Plains, the buffalo, the Indians! Weren't they the lucky guys!"

"Well, yes," replied his uncle, "though I'd rather call them fortunate gentlemen than lucky guys. One thing sure, they were accurate when they said the 'musquitors were verry troublesom' in all this Missouri Valley. They had to issue nets and bars to the men, so it says, and the misquitr, or mosquiter, or musquitor, was about the only 'anamal' they feared. If we don't turn in, they'll carry us off to-night."

CHAPTER XII

THE LOST HUNTER.

"IT'S a long, long way up to the Mandans!" sang John at the second camp above the Council Bluffs. "Wonder if we ever will get there before winter! Here we are, just below the Vermilion, over nine hundred and fifty miles up the river, and over three weeks out, but we're only halfway to the Yellowstone, and still a good deal more than six hundred miles below the Mandan Villages, though I've counted fifty-three towns and cities we've passed in the river, coming this far. It certainly does look as though we'll have to winter up there, sure enough."

"Oh, I don't know," demurred Rob, consulting the pages of his own notebook. "No fellow can ask an outboard motor to do better than ours have. I'll admit we're just inside our forty-mile-a-day stunt, but that's five miles an hour and only eight hours a day. I'll bet they would have been mighty glad to do half that."

"I've been wondering how they were able to spurt so much, north of the Platte," said John.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I'll bet I know!" broke in Jesse. "It's because the shores were more open, so they could use the cordelle! They'd been doing it, too, for on August 26th they made a new 'Toe line' out of braided elk hide. Clark killed an elk on August 25th, and Reuben Fields killed five deer that day, and George Shannon killed an elk that day, too. So they 'jurked the meet,' and made the hides into a tracking line. That beats rowing or paddling to get up a river. We saw that on the Peace River and the Mackenzie, didn't we?"

"I believe you're right, son!" said Rob. "These long sandy reaches, where the men could trot on the line—that was where they got their mileage, I'll warrant."

"George Shannon?" said Uncle Dick, who was listening as he sat on his bed roll near the fire. "George Shannon, eh? Well, he didn't bring in any more elk meat after that for many a day, that's sure."

"I know!" Rob nodded. "That's the man that got lost!"

"Yes, and trouble enough it gave the party and the leaders. They sent out two men, Shields and J. Fields, to find him and the horses. That was the second day. But they didn't find him. He didn't show up for sixteen

ON THE MISSOURI

days. Luckily, he kept on ahead of the boat all the time, but, as we all know, the most confusing way on earth to get lost from a party is while you are on foot and the party is in a boat. Even Sir Alexander Mackenzie got lost that way, on the Findlay River; and so have we all of us."

"Well, poor Shannon nearly starved to death. I don't think he was a first-class hunter, either, or he'd not have gone out without his ammunition. In a country swarming with game he went for twelve days with only grapes to eat, except one rabbit that he shot with a piece of stick instead of a bullet. He held on to one horse, and lucky he did. Here's what the *Journal* says about Shannon—whom Lewis himself found:

"He became weak and feable deturmined to lay by and wait for a tradeing boat, which is expected. Keeping one horse as a last resorse, yet a man had like to have starved to death in a land of Plenty for the want of Bullits or something to kill his meat."

"Where was he when they found him?" John had his map ready.

"Well, let's see. They found him on September 11th, and they had traveled thirteen days, not counting stops, and made one hundred and sixty miles by the river. They must by

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

then have been at least thirty miles above what is now Fort Randall, South Dakota—I should say, somewhere near Wheeler, South Dakota. Well, something of a walk for George, eh?”

“Rather!” was Jesse’s comment. “Oh, I suppose it’s easy to call him a dub, but the commanding officers didn’t.”

“But now,” went on their leader, “a lot of things have been happening since Shannon left, and here are a lot of interesting things to keep in mind. One thing is, they expected a trading boat up. That must have been from St. Louis, for Trudeau’s post. That was long before the days of the regular fur forts, and that accounts for all this country having its French names on it.

“Another thing or two: By this time, in lower South Dakota, everybody was killing buffalo and elk, great quantities of splendid meat. By now, also, in early September, they had got on the antelope range for the first time, and their first ‘goat,’ as they called it, was skinned and described. They got another new animal, which they called a ‘barkeing squirrel,’ or ‘ground rat’—on September 7th. That was the first prairie dog, a great curiosity to them—the same day they saw their first ‘goat.’ They managed to drown out one prairie dog, which

ON THE MISSOURI

I never heard of anyone else being able to do. They dug down six feet, and did not get half-way to the 'lodge,' as they called the den.

"Also, they saw the western magpie, which seemed a 'verry butifull' bird to them. Also again, on September 5th, they had seen their first blacktail deer, which now, until they got into the Mandan and Yellowstone country, was to outnumber the white tail, which they called the 'common deer,' because they never had seen any other sort. On one day, September 17th, Lewis and his men killed two blacktail, eight 'fallow' deer, and five 'common' deer. Gass—who by now has been elected sergeant to take poor Floyd's place—in his *Journal* says they killed thirteen common deer, two black-tailed, three buffalo, and a 'goat' that day—not a half bad day, that, eh? Don't you wish we'd been along?

"But Gass in his book also says something I want you to remember, for it may help explain the 'fallow' deer which Clark mentions, and which I don't understand at all. Gass says: 'There is another species of deer in this country, with small horns and long tails. The tail of one we killed was 18 inches long.' Now that precisely coincides with the 'fantail' deer which some old-time hunters of my acquaintance say

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

they have killed in the Black Hills country, though scientists say there never was any fantail deer. Our men were now right east of the Black Hills. For myself, I am convinced there was a fantail deer, and that it has far more rights as a species than the dozen or more 'species' of bears which our Washington scientists keep on finding.

"But even this is not all I am trying to get into your minds about this country where our lost hunter Shannon was wandering alone. They were getting all sorts of elk, catfish, and beaver, from the last of August on, but better here—on September 5th they saw both 'goats' and wild turkeys on the same day. Did you know that wild turkeys ranged so far north? Well, they at that time overlapped the range of the buffalo, the elk, the black-tailed deer, the badger, the antelope, the prairie dog, and the magpie.

"And in this hunting paradise, they killed on one day, September 8th, two buffalo, one large elk, one small elk, four deer, three turkeys, and a squirrel. All gone now, even almost all the prairie dogs and maybe the magpies; and we haven't seen any young wild geese on our trip, either. But now, following out the record of these men, we can see what a wonderful

ON THE MISSOURI

hunting country they had been in, almost every day from St. Louis, especially here, where the lower country began to blend with the high Plains and their game animals. Great days, boys—great days! Alas! that they are gone for you and me forever.”

“You’re getting off the track, Uncle Dick,” said John, critically, just now, as the former concluded his long talk on the game animals.

“Why, what do you mean?”

“While Shannon was lost, and while they were all having such good luck hunting, they at last had found their Sioux and got them in for a council. That was under an oak tree, at the mouth of the Jacque, or James, River, on August 29th. Old man Dorion had found his son Pierre, who was trading among the Sioux, it says. Well, they got five chiefs and about seventy others, and they all went into council.”

“Oak tree, did you say, John? Oak tree this far north?” Jesse was particular.

“Yes, sir, oak tree—lots of them all through here then. Clark tells how the deer and elk ate the acorns, and how fond they were of them. Didn’t you notice that?”

“Well, let’s push off and run up to the old council ground,” said Rob, who was always

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

for getting forward. "It can't be more than a few hours' run, for we don't stop at any towns, you know."

They did this, and spent some time studying the spot, so that they could believe they were on the very council ground where Lewis and Clark first met the Sioux, below the Calumet Bluff, on the "Butifull Plain near the foot of the high land which rises with a gradual assent near this Bluff." At least a trace of the old abundance of the timber could be seen. They consulted their *Journal* and argued for a long time.

"This is where they sent out the two men to hunt for the lost man Shannon," said Rob. "And here is where our captains made their big treaty speeches with the Sioux and gave them medals and the D.S.O., and the Congressional Medal and things. They had a lot of government 'Good Indian' certificates all ready to fill in, and it peeved them when one of the chiefs handed back his certificate and said he didn't care for it, but would rather have some whiskey."

"Those Sioux must have been a surly bunch," said Rob. "But Captain Lewis impressed them very much, and Captain Clark let down his long red hair and astonished them, and every-

ON THE MISSOURI

body fed them and gave them presents; and they appointed young Mr. Dorion a commissioner, and gave him a flag, and told him to bring about a peace between all these tribes—the Sioux, Omahas, Pawnees, Poncas, Otoes, and Missouris—and to try to get chiefs of each tribe to go down the river and to Washington, to see the Great Father. And the *Journal* kept them good and busy, setting down the names of the different bands of the Sioux and telling how they looked.”

John grinned, and pointed to the page. “‘The Warriors are Verry much deckerated with Paint Porcupine quils and feathers, large leagins and mockersons, all with buffalow robes of Different Colors, the Squars wore Petic coats and a White Buffalow roabe with the black hare turned back over their necks and Sholders.’ I’ll say they had plenty to do, writing and hunting and making speeches. It wasn’t any pleasure party, when you come right down to it, now!”

“We haven’t found George Shannon yet,” interrupted Jesse, dryly.

“Give us time!” answered Rob. “I vote to stay here all night. I can see the blue smokes of their council fires, and see the men dancing, and the painted Indians sitting around, and the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

great council pipe passing—red pipestone, with eagle feathers on the stem; and meat hanging in camp, and the squaws cooking, dogs yelping, drums going. Oh, by Jove! Oh, by Jove! Those were the things to make you sit up late at night! I wish we'd been along."

"We *are* along!" said Uncle Dick, soberly. "If you can see those stirring scenes, we are along. So, Rob, as you say, we'll pitch our camp and dream, for at least a day, of our own wonderful America when it was young."

John and Jesse were busy clearing a place for the tent. "I want the fire right close up to the tent," said John, "and we don't want to burn off either a tent pole or an overhead guy rope."

"Oh," rejoined Jesse, the youngest of them all, "I'll show you how to do that!"

He dug into his war bag and brought out a roll of stout wire. "Run this from the top of the front pole on out, ten or twelve feet, and stretch it over a couple of shear poles. See? That'll stiffen the tent, and yet you can build a fire right under the wire, and it won't hurt it any."

"A good idea, Jesse," approved their leader as he saw this. "A mighty good idea for cold weather—about as good as your open fireplace

ON THE MISSOURI

of sheet steel with a stovepipe—open wider in front than behind, and reflecting the heat into the tent. I've tried that last invention of yours, Jess, and it works fine in coolish weather. We'll try it again, maybe."

"I'm making me a new kind of airplane now," said Jesse, modestly. "It's different in some ways. I like to sort of figure things out, that way."

"That's good. And to-night, son, I want you to see whether you can't figure out a nice fat catfish on your set line. We need meat in camp; and that's about what it'll have to be, I suppose."

Thus, talking together of this thing and that, they made their own comfortable camp, spreading down their own buffalo robes on the ground for their beds, on the old council ground of the Sioux. They had a hearty supper and soon were ready to turn in, for the mosquitoes were bad enough, as they found. Rob sat late at night alone by the little fire.

"Come on to bed, Rob," called Jesse. "What do you see out there, anyway?"

"Indians," replied Rob. "Sioux in robes and feathers. Two men in uniform coats, one tall and dark, the other tall and with red hair. Don't you see them, too?"

CHAPTER XIII

GETTING NORTH

BUT we haven't found George Shannon yet," again insisted Jesse, at their breakfast.

"And you haven't run your set line yet, Mr. Jess," reminded Rob; which was enough to cause Jesse to run down to the bank with his mouth full of bacon. He had forgotten all about his fishing at the time. At once they heard him shout in excitement, and joined him on the bank.

"Geewhillikens!" called Jesse. "I got a whale on here now!"

He was playing a fish on his hand line, taking in and giving line as he could, for the fish was strong. It was some time before they could get to see it, and when Jesse at last landed it on the bank he called for his .22 rifle and shot it through the head.

"There!" he said. "I knew I'd find some big game to shoot. Isn't he a whale? I'll bet he'll go twelve pounds. He's a whiter cat, and a racier, than the big yellows, down below. He looks gamier and better to eat."

ON THE MISSOURI

"He goes in the gunny sack for supper," said Rob. "Do you suppose he'll keep for three days, a hundred and fifty miles? I shouldn't wonder if Shannon would enjoy a bite, for he'll be hungry by that time."

"It's a long, long way, up to the Mandans!" John began to sing again. "Six hundred miles. And we'll have to have gas pretty soon."

They finished their breakfast, and, with the skill they had gained in many camps together, soon were packed and on their way above the old council camp of the Sioux.

"Buffalo and elk, every way you can look!" exclaimed John. "Elk swimming across the river. Herds of game feeding on the bluff sides! Grouse, foxes, prairie dogs, jack rabbits, pelicans, squirrels, deer, wolves—the boats full of meat all the time, and two or three beaver every night! Now there's cottonwoods. By and by the river'll begin to take a straighter shoot north. It's a long, long way up to the Mandans!"

"And right through the country of those roaming, murdering Sioux!" added Rob.

"Right you are, Rob," said Uncle Dick. "The Sioux used to hunt and rob as far as Fort Laramie, six hundred miles up the Platte, and on the head of the Jim River in Dakota, and

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

all between. Their homes were where their hats were—and they hadn't any hats."

For some days now they threaded their way among the countless islands and sand bars of the great river, until at last they made camp early on the evening of June 9th, near the point which, as closely as they could figure it, was about where the Lewis and Clark bateau lay at the time George Shannon was found wandering on the Plains, alone and ready to despair. This was about thirty miles below the mouth of the White River.

"Well, we've got him," said Jesse, solemnly, "and told him never to leave camp without matches and ammunition and an ax. And that's that!"

"Time for another catfish, Jesse," said their leader. "John, you take the .22 and wander along the edge of the bluff. You might see a young jack rabbit. I don't believe I'd bother the ducks, for that's against the law and we don't break laws even when we are not watched. Rob, you and I will make camp—we'll not need anything but the mosquito bars."

Inside the hour a shout from Jesse informed them that he had another catfish on his throw line, and soon he had it flopping on the sand. He killed it stone dead by thrusting a stiff

ON THE MISSOURI

straw back into the brain through the "little hole in its face," as he called the sinus which leads into the head cavity.

"I throw out my line," said he, "with a piece of meat or minnow on the hook. Then I stick a stick down in the bank, two or three feet long, and take a half hitch around the top. It acts as a sort of rod and gives when the fish bites. He pulls down and swallows the bait, and the spring of the stick holds him safer than a straight pull would. To skin him, I cut around back of his front side fins and take hold of the skin with my pliers—just slit the hide a little down the sides, and it comes off. These channel cats aren't bad to eat."

John joined them before dark, with two half-grown jack rabbits which he had found on the bluffs below. He spoke of the fine view and of the splendid sunset he had seen. Rob was examining the rabbits, each of which had been shot squarely through the eye. "Dead-shot John, the old trapper!" said he. "That's the way!"

"You didn't think I'd shoot 'em anywhere but through the head, did you?" John inquired. "No sir, not yet!"

So, with meat in camp, they sat down, still in "verry good sperits," as John quoted from the *Journal*.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Now day after day, hurrying hard as they could, they still drove on northward, along the great bends of what began to seem an interminable waterway. One bend, they fancied, they surely identified with the one mentioned in the *Journal*, which then was thirty miles around and not much over a half a mile across the neck. They reflected that in more than a hundred years the great river in all likelihood had cut through what Clark called the "Narost part," the necks of dozens of such bends. On the map they identified the Rosebud Indian Reservation to the west. The great Plains country into which they now were advancing seemed wild, lonely, and at times forbidding, and the settlements farther and farther apart. They were in cattle country rather than farming country much of the time.

The *Journal* brought up the second great Sioux council of Lewis and Clark, on the "Teton river"—near Pierre, South Dakota—on the date of September 25th; but so faithful had the motive power of the good ship *Adventurer* proved, that our party pulled into the most suitable camping spot they could find not too near by, around noon of June 13th.

"Can't complain," said Rob, taking off his grease-spattered overalls and wiping his hands

ON THE MISSOURI

on a bit of waste. "We've slipped a day on our schedule, but from what we now know of this little old river, we are mighty lucky to be here and not down by Council Bluffs, or maybe Kansas City! It's only a little over three hundred miles now to the Mandans. That's as far ahead as I can think."

"And as to rowing and paddling and poling and tracking her this far," added John, "say, twelve hundred miles from the mouth of the Missouri—whew! It makes my back ache. Seems to me we've skipped along."

"Well, why shouldn't we?" demanded Jesse. "Those fellows had the finest kind of hunting in the world; over a thousand of miles of it, to here—over four thousand miles of it altogether—not a single day that didn't have some sport in it, and they killed tons and tons of game. But all that is left for us is water and sand and willows. Ducks and grouse, yes, but we can't shoot 'em. And I've got so I don't crave to look a catfish in the face."

Uncle Dick looked at the boys gravely and saw that the monotony of the long voyage was beginning to wear on them.

"Stick her through to the Mandans, fellows," said he. "We'll see what we'll see. But Jesse, how can you complain of being bored when

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

right now you are standing where Will Clark come pretty near being killed by the Teton Sioux?

"Yes, sir, it was right here that they tried to stop him from going back to the big boat. Then, for the first time, the Redhead Chief drew his sword—they always went into uniform when they had a council on—and Lewis and the men on the boat trained the swivel gun on the band of Sioux who were detaining Clark.

"You see, they had the council awning stretched on a sand bar in the mouth of the river, and the bateau was seventy yards off, anchored. They had sent out for the Sioux to come in, had smoked with them, given them provisions, made speeches to them, given them whisky and tobacco. The Sioux were arrogant, wanted more whisky and tobacco, and when Clark came ashore with only five men they tried to hold him up, grabbing the boat painter and pulling their bows. The second chief, says Clark, was bad, 'his justures were of such a personal nature I felt Myself Compeled to Draw my Sword. . . . I felt Myself Warm and Spoke in verry positive terms.' Which is all he says of a very dangerous scrape."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Whyn't they bust into 'em with the swivel gun?" demanded Jesse. "At seventy yards they'd 'a' got plenty of 'em."

"Sure they would. And then maybe the Sioux would never have let them through at all and would have shot into every boat of white men that later came up the river. No, those young men showed courage and good judgment both. They did not know fear, but they did not forget duty, and they were there to make peace among all the tribes along the Missouri.

"President Jefferson knew that country would soon be visited by many of our fur traders, and he didn't want the boats stopped. Lewis and Clark both knew this."

"But the Sioux didn't bluff them," said Rob, "because Lewis went ashore with only five men, in his turn, and then they all pulled off a dance, and a big talk in a big council tent—it must have been big, for there were seventy Sioux in it, and just those two young American officers. The big pipe was on forked sticks in front of the chief, and under it they had sprinkled swan's-down, and they all were dressed up to their limit. And though they could have been killed any minute, these two white men had that lot of Indians

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

feeding from the hand, as the slang goes, Uncle Dick!"

Uncle Dick nodded, and Rob went on, referring to his *Journal*. "And then the big chief said what they had done was O.K., and asked the white men to 'take pity on them'—which I think is an old Indian term of asking for some more gifts. Anyhow, the upshot was they smoked the peace pipe and ate 'some of the most Delicate parts of the Dog which was prepared for the fiest and made a Sacrefise to the flag.' Then they cleared away the floor, built up a fire in the lodge, and 'about 10 Musitions began playing on Tambereens'—which made a 'gingling noise.' The women came in and danced, with staffs decorated with scalps, and everybody sang and everybody promised to be good."

"Some party!" said Jesse, slangily; but Rob, now excited, went on with the story:

"Poor Clark nearly got sick from lack of sleep. But the next day the Sioux held on to the cable again and wanted to stop the boat till they had more tobacco. Then Lewis told the chiefs they couldn't bluff him into giving them anything. Clark did give them a little tobacco and told the men not to fire the swivel. Then they ran up a red flag under the white, and the

ON THE MISSOURI

next Sioux that came aboard they told that those two flags meant peace or war, either way they wanted it, and if they wanted peace, they'd all better go back home and stay there, and not monkey with the buzz saw too long—well, you know, Uncle Dick, they didn't really say that, but that was what they meant.

"The Sioux followed alongshore and begged tobacco for fifty miles, clean up to the Ree villages, near the mouth of the Cheyenne River. Oh, they found the Sioux, all right; and glad enough they were to get through them, even paying tribute as they had done."

"That's a fair statement of the Teton affair," nodded the leader of the party. "Many a white life that tribe took, in the seventy-five years that were to follow. For the next hundred miles there were either Sioux or Rees pestering and begging and keeping the party uneasy all the time."

"And I'll bet they were glad to get to the Rees, too," commented John. "Those half-Pawnees raised squashes, corn, and beans. But by now, if they had had a good shotgun or so along, they could have killed all sorts of swans, brant and other geese, and ducks, for they were running into the fall migration of the wild fowl. Grouse, too, were mentioned

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

as very numerous. They stuck to big game—it was easy to get meat when you could see a ‘gang of goats’—antelope—swimming the river, and the hills covered with game.”

“Uncle Dick,” resumed Rob, as they again gathered around the map and *Journal* spread down on the tent floor, “those men must have had some notion of the country, even had some map of it.”

“Yes, they had a map—made by one Evans, the best then to be had, and I suppose made up from the fur traders’ stories. But it was incomplete. Even to-day few maps are anywhere near exactly accurate. For instance, when they came to the Cheyenne River—which, of course, the traders called the Chien, or Dog, River—Clark said that nothing was known of it till a certain Jean Vallé told them that it headed in the Black Hills.

“Of course, it’s all easy now. We know the Black Hills are in the southwest corner of South Dakota, and that the Belle Fourche River of the old cow country runs into the Cheyenne, which flows almost east, into the Missouri. But if Mr. Vallé had not been out to the Black Hills, Lewis and Clark would not have been able to give this information. Then, again, while they were at the Ree village, on

ON THE MISSOURI

October 10th, two more Frenchmen came to breakfast, 'Mr. Tabo and Mr. Gravolin,' who were already in this country.

"To me, one of the most interesting things is to see the overlapping and blending of all these things—how the turkey once overlapped the antelope and prairie dog; how the Rees, who were only scattered branches of the Pawnees, properly at home away down in Kansas—overlapped the Sioux, who sometimes raided the Pawnees below the Platte.

"And these French traders said the Spaniards sometimes came to the mouth of the Kaw River, and even on the Platte. So there we were, overlapping Spain to the west. And up above, Great Britain was overlapping our claims to the valley of the Columbia and even part of this Missouri Valley. You can see how important this journey was.

"You'll remember the lower Brulé Sioux Reservation, below us and west of the river. The Cheyenne Reservation is in above here, below the mouth of the Cheyenne River. From there the river takes a pretty straight shoot up into North Dakota. A great game country, a wild cow country, and now a quiet farming country. A bleak, snow-covered, wind-swept waste it then was. And it was winter that

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

first stopped that long, slow, steady, tireless advance of the 'Corps of Vollenteers.'"

"I see they broke one more private before they got to the Mandans," said John, running ahead in the pages of the book.

"Yes, that was Newman, who had been found guilty of mutinous expressions. Seventy-five lashes and expulsion from the Volunteers was what the court of nine men gave him. They always were dignified, and they enforced respect from whites and Indians alike."

"Well," grumbled Jesse, "it looks to me like there had been a whole lot of people wandering around across this country long before Lewis and Clark got here."

"Right you are, my boy. The truth is that right across these Plains there went west the first American exploring expedition that ever saw the Rockies. The French nobleman Verendrye, his three sons, and a nephew, not to mention quite a band of Indians, started west across from the Mandan country in 1742. On January 1, 1743, he records his first sight of the Rocky Mountains, which he calls the Shining Mountains—a fine name it is for them, too.

"The Verendrye expedition was the first to cross Wyoming or the Dakotas so far in the west. They came back through the Bad Lands,

ON THE MISSOURI

above here, and Verendrye records in his journal that near a fort of the Arikara Indians he buried a plate of lead, with the arms and inscription of the king. He did this in March, 1743. It always was supposed that this was at or near Fort Pierre, South Dakota. That suspicion was absolutely correct.

"In a little railway pamphlet put out by the Northern Pacific Railway it is stated that on Sunday, February 16, 1913—one hundred and seventy years after Verendrye got back that far east—a school girl playing with some others at the top of a hill scraped the dirt from the end of a plate, which then was exposed about an inch above the ground. She pulled it out. The story said it looked like a range-stove lining. It was eight and a half inches long by six and a half inches wide and an eighth of an inch in thickness. Well, it was discovered to be the old Verendrye lead plate—that's all!"

"That's a most extraordinary thing!" said Rob. "Well, anyhow, it shows the value of leaving exploring records. So you couldn't blame William Clark for writing his name at least twice on the rocks."

"No, the story of the Verendrye plate is, I think, one of the most curious things I have ever read in regard to early Western history.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

You never can tell about such things. Well, in any case Verendrye, the first white man who ever saw the Shining Mountains, died in 1749, That was fifty-five years before Lewis and Clark started up the river.

"There is not a hundred miles, or ten miles, or one mile, along all these shores which has not historical value if you and I only knew the story."

"But it's a long, long way up to the Mandans still," began John once more.

His Uncle Dick gayly chided him.

"It'll not be so long—only a little over three hundred miles from here."

"If only there were the buffalo!" said Jesse.

"Yes, if only there were the buffalo, and the antelope and the Indians! I'd give a good deal to have lived in those days, my own self. Good night, Jess. Good night, Rob and Frank."

CHAPTER XIV

IN DAYS OF OLD

THE young travelers each night made their beds carefully, for they long since had learned that unless a man sleeps well he cannot enjoy the next day's work. It has been noted that they had three buffalo robes for part of their bedding, one each for Uncle Dick and Rob, while John and Jesse shared one between them. In the morning Uncle Dick noted that the latter two boys had their robe spread down with the hair side up.

"I suppose you did that to get more of a mattress?" he said. "But suppose you wanted to keep warm in really cold weather, in a snow-storm, say. Which side of the robe would you wear outside?"

"Why, the smooth side, of course!" replied Jesse, who was rolling the robe. "That'd have the warm fur next to you, so you'd be warmer that way."

"No, there's where you are wrong," said his uncle. "The old-timers always slept with the hair outside, and the Indians wore their robes

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

that way. 'Buffalo know how to wear his hide!' is the way an Indian put it. And, you see, a buffalo always did wear his hair outside! Next to the musk ox, he was the hardiest animal on this continent and could stand the most cold. No blizzards on these plains ever troubled him. He could get feed when other animals starved."

"He'd paw down through the snow to the grass," said Jesse.

"Again you are wrong. A horse paws snow. The buffalo threw the snow aside with his hairy jaws or his whole head—he rooted for the grass!"

"Well, I didn't know that."

"A good many things are now forgotten," said his friend. "Writers and artists and even scientists quite often are wrong. For instance, in pictures you almost always see the herd led by the biggest buffalo bull. In actual fact it was always an old cow that led the herd. The bulls usually were at the rear, to defend against wolves. And when a buffalo ran, he ran into the wind, not downwind, like the deer. Few remember that now.

"Take the antelope, too. The old hunters always knew that the antelope shed his horns, same as a deer, but scientists denied that for

ON THE MISSOURI

years, because they didn't happen to see any shed horns. I have had an antelope buck's horn pull off in my hand, in the month of May, and it left the soft core exposed, covered with coarse black filaments like black hairs. Naturally, in the fall, at the time Lewis and Clark got their 'goat,' as they called the antelope, the horns were on tight, so they supposed they didn't shed.

"They sent President Jefferson specimens of the new animals they found—the antelope, prairie dog, prairie badger, magpie, bighorn, and a grizzly hide or so. They got their four bighorn heads at the Mandans, none very large, though 'two feet long and four inches diameter' seemed big to them. And I shouldn't wonder if those horns could have been pulled off the pith after they got good and dry. The horns of the bighorn will dry out and lose at least ten per cent of their measurement, in a few years' hanging on a wall. I have had a bighorn's curly horn come off the pith in rough handling three or four years after it was killed; but of course the horns never were shed in life."

"Did they get them along the Missouri?" asked Jesse, now.

"Not until they got above the mouth of the Yellowstone. There they killed a lot of them."

"They saw one big grizzly track before they

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

got to the Mandans," said Rob, who was listening.

"Oh yes—that might have been. Alexander Henry the younger tells us of grizzlies in northern Minnesota in early days. In all the range country along the Missouri from lower South Dakota the grizzly used to range, and he was on the Plains all the way to the Rockies, and from Alaska to New Mexico and Utah, as I can personally testify. Just how far south he ran in here I don't know—some think as far south as upper Iowa, but we can't tell. He couldn't do much with deer and antelope, and worked more on elk and buffalo, when it came to big meat. He'd dig out mice and eat crickets, though, as well.

"Yes, he'd been all along this country, I'm sure.

"But Lewis and Clark didn't really kill any grizzlies until they got above the Yellowstone—and then they certainly got among them. Gass records sixteen grizzlies met with between the Yellowstone and the Great Falls of the Missouri. He usually calls them 'brown bears,' which shows the great color range of the grizzly. Lewis and the others call them 'white bears.' The typical grizzly had a light-yellowish coat, often dark underneath.

ON THE MISSOURI

“Of course, color has nothing to do with it. I’ve seen them almost black. The silvertip is a grizzly. The giant California bear was a grizzly. The great Kadiak bears which you boys saw were grizzlies of a different habitat. I’ve seen a grizzly with a hide almost red. But of course you know that the ‘cinnamon bear’ is practically always a black bear; and a black bear mother may have two cubs, one red and one quite black.

“Scientists try to establish a dozen or two ‘species’ of bears—even making different ‘species’ of the black bears of the southern Mississippi bottoms—Arkansas, Louisiana, etc.—and I don’t know how many sorts of ‘blue bears’ and ‘straw bears,’ ‘glacier bears,’ etc., among the grizzlies. Of course, bears differ, just as men do. But the one thing which remains constant is the length of the claws, or front toe nails—what the *Journal* calls their ‘talons.’ In a black bear these are always short. In a grizzly they are always long—they get them up to four and one-half inches, and I believe some of your Kadiaks have even longer claws. Colors grade, but claws don’t. I even think the polar bear is a grizzly of the North—white because he lives on snow and ice, and with a snaky head

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

because he has to swim. But his claws he needed and kept.

"The long-clawed bears were all predatory; the short-clawed ones never were. Not long ago I read a magazine story about a black bear which killed a moose with seven-foot horns. There never was a black bear ever killed any moose, and there never was any moose with horns that wide. Such things are nonsense—like a great part of the magazine animal fiction."

Rob was interested. "Too bad they've trapped off about all the grizzlies," he said now. "I've tried a lot of kinds of sport, and of them all, I like grizzly hunting, quail shooting, and fly fishing for trout."

"Not a bad selection! Well, the first is hard to get now. The grizzly is closer to extinction than the elk or the buffalo, for the buffalo breed in domestic life, and the grizzly—well, he hasn't domesticated yet. He's the one savage—he and the gray wolf—that would never civilize. And he's gone."

"But, Uncle Dick, those bears must have been a different species from grizzlies nowadays. Look how they fought! Even Lewis came near being killed by them more than once."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Yes, they'd fight, in those days, for they were bigger and bolder, and they had not yet learned fear of the rifle. You must remember that while, in this country up to the Mandans, the early traders had been ahead of Lewis and Clark, above the Yellowstone no white man ever had gone. Those bears thought a white man was something good to eat, and they offered to eat him.

"Their rifles were muzzle loaders—I've often and often tried to find just the size ball they used, but I can't find such exact mention of their weapons—but they were light and inefficient single-shot rifles, as we now look at it, even in the hands of exact riflemen, as all those men were. So the grizzlies jumped them. They shot one sixteen times. Lewis had to jump in the river to escape from one. Oh, they had merry times in those days, when grizzlies were regular fellows!"

John nearly always had precise facts at hand. He now found his copy of the little journal of Patrick Gass. "Here's how big one was," he said. "Gass calls it a 'very large brown bear,' and it measured three feet five inches around the head, three feet eleven inches around the neck, five feet ten and one-half inches around the breast. His foreleg was twenty-three

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

inches around, and his talons were four and three-eighths inches. He was eight feet seven and one-half inches long."

"That was a big grizzly," Uncle Dick nodded, "a very big one, for this latitude. The biggest silvertip grizzly I ever knew in Montana weighed nine hundred pounds. But they were bigger in California and all up the Pacific coast—trees and bears grew bigger there, for some reason. You boys have killed Kadiaks as big as this Gass grizzly. But you didn't do it with a flintlock, small-bore, muzzle loader, fair stand-up fight. And your Kadiak bear would run when it saw you—so would a Lewis and Clark grizzly; only it would run toward you! Six men of them went out after one of them and wounded it, and it almost got the lot of them. Another time a grizzly chased a man down a bank into the river—bad actors, those grizzlies, in those times."

John looked at his watch. "Getting late, folks," said he. "On our way?"

"On our way!" And in a few moments the *Adventurer* had her load aboard.

"You will now notice the Sioux running along the bank," said John, "trailing the boat, shooting ahead of it, threatening to stop it, begging tobacco, asking for a ride—all sorts

ON THE MISSOURI

of a nuisance. But we spread the square sail, set out, and proceeded on!"

In fact, so well had they cast out ahead, as usual, the nature of the country into which they were coming, and so well had they studied its history, that it needs not tell their daily journey among the great bluffs, the wide bars, and the willow-lined shores of the great river.

Gradually, the course of the river being now more nearly to the north, they noted the higher and bleaker aspect of the Plains, which the *Journal* described as land not so good as that below the Platte. Of the really arid country farther west, and of the uses of irrigation, the *Journal* knew little, and spoke of it as a desert, though now, on the edge of the river, the clinging towns and the great ranch country back of them, with the green fields of farms and the smokes of not infrequent homes, warned them that the past was gone and that now another day and land lay before them.

After many misadventures among the countless deceiving channels and bars of the river, and after locating the several Indian villages of the past and of to-day—the Rees, the Sioux bands, the Cheyennes—they did at last cross the North Dakota line at the Standing Rock agency, did pass the mouths of the Cannon

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Ball and Heart Rivers, and raise the smokes of Bismarck on the right, and Mandan on the left bank, with the great connecting railway bridge. They drove on, and at length chose their stopping place below Mandan, on the west shore.

Now, as always at the river towns they had passed, they met many curious and inquisitive persons, eager to know who they were, where they were going, whence they had come, and how long they had been on the way.

"Well, sir," said Rob to one newspaperman who drove up to their little encampment the next morning, in pursuit of a rumor he had heard that the boat had ascended the river from its mouth, "since you ask us, we are the perogue *Adventurer*, Company of Volunteers for Northwestern Discovery, under Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. We are in search of winter quarters, and we hope the natives are peaceful. We have been, to this landing, just forty-nine days, five hours and thirty-five minutes, this second day of July."

"But that's impossible! Why, it's over a thousand miles from here to St. Louis by water!" remarked the editor, himself a middle-aged man.

"Would you say so, sir?"

ON THE MISSOURI

"Well, how far is it?"

"You should know, sir; you live here."

"But I never had any occasion to know or to care," smiled the visitor.

Rob smiled also. "Well, sir, according to Patrick Gass——"

"I never heard of him ——"

"——who kept track of it a hundred and seventeen years ago, it's about sixteen hundred and ten miles, though we don't figure it quite sixteen hundred. Call it fourteen hundred and fifty-two, as the river chart does."

"Jerusalem! And you say you made it in forty-nine days? Why, that's—how many miles a day?"

"Well, we set out to do over forty miles a day, but we couldn't quite make it. We ran against a good many things."

"And broke all known and existing records at that, I'll bet a hat! How on earth!"

"Well, you see, sir," Rob went on, politely, "we've rigged a double outboard, with an extension bed on the stern. They're specially made for us and they're powerful kickers. In fair water and all going good, they'll do six and eight an hour, with auxiliary sail; and we traveled ten hours nearly every day. But then, it wasn't always what you'd call fair water."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"At least, we got here for the Fourth," he added. "We began to think, down by the Cannon Ball, that we wouldn't. We planned to spend the Fourth among the Mandans."

"If there's ice cream," interrupted Jesse.

"Ice cream?" The visitor turned to Uncle Dick, who sat smiling. "All you want, and won't cost you a cent! Come on up to my house, won't you, and spend the night? Have you got all the eggs and butter and bread and fruit you want—oranges, lemons, melons?"

"Of melons we got quite a lot at the upper Arikaree village," said Rob, solemnly. "But oranges—and ice cream—they didn't have those!"

Uncle Dick joined their visitor in a hearty laugh. "These chaps are great for making believe," said he. "We're crossing on the old Lewis and Clark trail, as nearly as we can. We're going to the head of the Missouri River, and my young friends are trying to restore the life of the old days as they go along."

"Fine! I wish more would do so. I'm ignorant, myself, but I'm going to be less so. An idea, sir!"

"Well," he continued, "you'll have to come up to town and stop with me. I'll get a man to watch your boat—not that I think it would

ON THE MISSOURI

need much watching. You'll be here over the Fourth, at least?"

"Oh, yes," replied Uncle Dick, now introducing himself, "we're ready to take a little rest and look around a little among the Mandans! Can you show us where the old Lewis and Clark winter quarters were?"

"Sure! To-morrow we can steam on up to that place, and also the site of old Fort Clark. Then I'll show you around among the painted savages of our city!"

They all laughed, and after pulling up the boat, drawing tight the tent flaps, and spreading the tarpaulin over the cargo, they joined their new friend in his motor car and sped off for the town, where they were made welcome and obliged to tell in detail the story of their long journey.

CHAPTER XV

AMONG THE MANDANS

“WELL,” said Jesse, late the next afternoon, when, in accordance with his promise, this new friend had pointed out the place where, the expert investigators usually agreed, the explorers built their winter quarters in the year 1804—near the plot called Elm Point, even now heavily timbered. “I don’t see much of a fort left here now. What’s become of it?”

“What becomes of any house built of cottonwood logs in ten or twenty years?” smiled his uncle. “But the *Journal* and other books tell us that here or about here is where the old stockade once stood. It was opposite to where Fort Clark later was built in 1831. You see, Fort Clark was on the west side, on a high bluff, and in its time quite a post, for it was one hundred and thirty-two by one hundred and forty-seven feet in size, and well built. Fort Clark was about fifty-five miles above the Northern Pacific Railroad bridge at Bismarck, North Dakota. We’ve had a good day’s run of it.

ON THE MISSOURI

"All Clark tells us about Fort Mandan is that it was on the north bank, that the ground was sandy, and that they cleared the timber to make room. He says they had cottonwood and elm and some small ash, but complains that the logs were large and heavy and they had to carry them in on hand spikes, by man power. They used no horses in rolling up the logs.

"But Patrick Gass tells more about the way they did. They had two rows of cabins, in two wings, at right angles, and each cabin had four rooms in it. I think the men slept upstairs, for when the walls were up seven feet they laid a puncheon floor, covered with grass and clay, which Gass says made 'a warm loft.' This projected about a foot, and a puncheon roof was put over that.

"The outer wall was about eighteen feet high. They had several fireplaces. They made a couple of storerooms in the angle of the two wings, and then put up their stockade in front, to complete their square. This stockade was made of upright logs, and had a gate, like most of the frontier posts, so that, what with their swivel gun and all their rifles, they could have made quite a fight against any sort of an attack, although they had no trouble of any kind.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"They were not very far from the Mandan villages. Quite a settlement this was, in these parts—not mentioning nine deserted villages inside of sixty miles below—two Mandan villages, built with the Mandan dirt-covered lodges, like those of the Rees; and besides that, villages of Sioux and Gros Ventres, and of a band they called the Watasoons, and seventy lodges of Crees and Assiniboines who came in later and the fierce Minnetarees—plenty of savages to warrant the expedition in taking no chances."

"I've read that the Indians at first were not so friendly," said Rob. "There were British traders among them, weren't there?"

"Oh yes, the Northwest Fur Company was in there, and an Irishman by the name of McCracken was on the ground at the time. Alexander Henry got there in 1806, you know. Now, Lewis sent out a note by McCracken to the agent at Fort Assiniboine. Those traders were none too friendly, and tried to stir up trouble. Two more of the Nor'westers, La-rocque and McKenzie, came in, with an interpreter and four men, and the interpreter, LaFrance, took it on him to speak sneeringly of the Americans. It did not take Captain Lewis long to call him to account."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Well, our fellows were up in there all alone, weren't they?" exclaimed Jesse.

"They certainly were, but they held their fort; and they held all the Northwestern country for us. As soon as the Northwest Fur Company found out that Lewis and Clark intended to cross the Rockies to the Columbia, they sent word East, and that company sent one of their best men, Simon Fraser, to ascend the Saskatchewan and beat the Americans in on the Columbia. But he himself was beaten in that great race by about a couple of years! So we forged the chain that was to hold the Oregon country to the United States afterward. Oh yes, our young captains had a big game to play, and they played it beautifully.

"They always talked peace among these Mandans and others, because they wanted the Missouri River opened to the American fur trade. They waited around, and held talks, and swapped tobacco for corn, and the American blacksmiths made for them any number of axes and hatchets and other things. By and by the Indians began to figure that they were more apt to get plenty of goods up the Missouri from the Americans than overland from the British traders. Do you see how that began to work out? Oh, our boys knew what they

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

were about, all right. And the result was that our fur trade swept up that river like an army with banners as soon as Lewis and Clark got back home. In a few years we had a hundred and forty fur trading posts on the Missouri and its upper tributaries, and from these our bold traders pushed out by pack train into every corner of the Rocky Mountains."

"Gee!" said Jesse, in his frequent and not elegant slang. "Gee! Those were the days!"

"Right you are—those were the days! Those were the great days of adventure and romance and exploration. It was through the fur trade that we explored the Rocky Mountains. Can't you see our men of the fur posts, paddling, rowing, sailing, tracking—getting up the Missouri? Great days, yes, Jesse—great days indeed."

"I wish we had a picture of that old stockade!" sighed John.

"None exists. Not a splinter of it remains; it was burned down in 1805, and the ruins later engulfed by the river. But I fancy we can see it, from the description. So there our party spent that first winter, and long and cold enough it was.

"They had to hunt or starve, but soon their

ON THE MISSOURI

buffalo and elk and deer and antelope got very thin, mere skin and bones. It was bitter cold, and the hunters came in frozen time and again—a hard, bare, bitter fight it was. From all accounts, it was an old-fashioned winter, for the mercury—they spelled it ‘merkery’—froze solid in a few minutes one day when they set the thermometer out of doors!”

“And it must have been cool inside the houses, too,” ventured John. “But of course they had to do their writing and fix up their things.”

“Quite so—they had to get their specimens ready to ship down the river in the spring. Then they had to make six canoes for use the next year, and as they found the timber unsuitable near the river, the men had to camp out where they found the trees, and then they carried the canoes by hand over to the river, a mile and a half.

“They sent the big flatboat, or bateau, down the river, and thirteen men went with it. The two perogues and the six new cottonwood dug-outs they took on west, up the river, when they started, on March 7, 1805, to finish their journey across the continent. Of these men, the party who went through, there were thirty-one; and there was one woman.”

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I know!" said Jesse. "Sacágawea!"

"Right! Sacágawea. Make it two words. 'Wea' means 'woman.' 'Bird Woman' was her name—Sacága Wea. And of the entire party, that Indian girl—she was only a girl, though lately married and though she started west with a very young baby—was worth more than any man. If it had not been for her they never would have got across.

"You see, up to this place, the Mandan towns, they had some idea of the country, and so also they had beyond here as far as the mouth of the Yellowstone—that's two hundred and eighty-eight miles above here. But beyond the mouth of the Ro' Jaune—it even then was called Roche Jaune, or Yellow Stone, by the early French *voyageurs*—it was said the foot of white man never then had passed. There was no map, no report or rumor to help them. If they had a guide, it couldn't be a white man.

"Now among the Mandans they found a man called Chaboneau, or Charboneau, a Frenchman, married to two Indian women, one of whom was Sacágawea. He had bought her from the Minnetarees, where she was a captive.

"Just think how the natives traveled in those days! You know the Sioux hunted on the

ON THE MISSOURI

upper Platte, as far as the Rockies. Well; this Minnetaree war party had been west of the Rockies, or in the big bend of the Rockies, at the very head of the Missouri River, among the Shoshonis. They took Sacágawea prisoner when she was a little girl, and brought her east, all the way over to Dakota, here. But she was Indian—she did not forget what she saw. She knew about the Yellowstone, and the Three Forks of the Missouri.

“Well now, whether it was because Chaboneau, the new interpreter, wanted her along, or whether Lewis and Clark figured she might be useful, Sacágawea went along, all the way to the Pacific—and all the way back to the Mandans again. Be sure, her husband did not beat her any more, while they were with the white captains. In fact, I rather think they made a pet of her. They found they could rely on her memory and her judgment.

“So the real guide they had in the nameless and unknown country was a Shoshoni Indian girl. It looked almost like something providential, the way they found her here, ready and waiting for them—the only possible guide in all that country. And to-day, such was the chivalry and justice of those two captains of

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

our Army—and such the chivalry and justice of the men of Oregon and the enthusiasm of the women of Oregon—you may see in Portland, near the sea to which she helped lead our flag, the bronze statue of Sacágawea, the Indian girl. That, at least, is one fine thing we have done in memory of the Indian.

“And within the last two or three years a bronze statue of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark has been erected at Charlottesville, Virginia, near the home of Meriwether Lewis—that was at Ivy station, to-day only a scattered settlement. And away down in Tennessee, in the forest of Lewis County, named after him, I have stood by the monument that state erected over the little-known and tragic grave of Captain Meriwether Lewis—far enough from the grave of the poor Indian girl who worshiped him more than she could her worthless husband.

“No one knows where Sacágawea was buried, though her history was traced a little way after the return to this country. She was buried perhaps in the air, on a scaffold, and left forgotten, as Indian women were, and we no more can stand by her grave than we can be sure we stand on the exact spot where Will

ON THE MISSOURI

Clark built his winter quarters among the Mandans.

"Great days, boys—yes, great days, and good people in them, too. So now I want you to study a little here.

"Look back down the river, which has seemed so long for you. To-morrow will be the Fourth of July. It was Christmas that Lewis and Clark celebrated with their men in their stockade."

Their new friend had for the most part been silent as he listened to this counselor of the party. He now spoke.

"Then I take it that you are going on up the river soon, sir?" said he. "I wish you good journey through the cow country. You'll find the river narrower, with fewer islands, so I hear; and I should think it became swifter, but—I don't know."

"I was going to come to that," said Uncle Dick, turning to Rob, John, and Jesse. "What do you think? I'd like you to get an idea of the river and all it meant, but we have only the summer and early fall to use. I don't doubt we could plug on up with the motors, and get a long way above Great Falls, but about the time we got to where we could have some fun fishing or maybe shooting, we'd have

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

to start east by rail. So I'd planned that we might make a big jump here."

"How do you mean, sir?" Rob asked.

"Change our transportation."

"Oh—because Lewis and Clark changed here?"

"Natural place for us to change, if we do at all," said Uncle Dick. "We ought to stick as close to the river as we can, and as a matter of fact we have covered the most monotonous part of it. But we had to do that, for there was no other way to get here and still hang anywhere near to the river. And until we got here we struck no westbound railroad that would advance us on our journey.

"Here we could get up the Yellowstone by rail, but we are working on the Missouri. If we run on by motor car up to Buford, there we can get by rail over to the Great Falls, and still hang closer to the river; although, of course, we'll not be following it."

"But what'll we do with our boat?" began Jesse, ruefully. "Hate to leave the little old *Adventurer*."

"Well, now," answered his uncle. "We couldn't so well take her along, could we?"

"I'd like mighty well to buy her," interrupted the editor. "That is, if you care to sell her."

ON THE MISSOURI

"I never knew my boys to sell any of their sporting equipment," said the other. "But I expect they'd give it to you, right enough. Eh, boys?"

They looked from one to another. "If the gentleman wanted her," began Rob, at last, "and if we've done with her, I don't see why we couldn't. But I think we ought to take the motors along as far as we can, because we might need them."

"Good idea," Uncle Dick nodded. "We can get a trailer here, can't we?" he asked of their friend.

"Sure; and a good car, too. I'll drive you up to Buford, myself, for the fun of it—and the value of it to me. I'll get a car at Bismarck. We can pack your outfit in the trailer and the motors, too, easily. You can check and express stuff through to Great Falls from Buford—and there you are. How'll you go from there—boat?"

"I don't believe so," replied Uncle Dick. "I believe we'd have more freedom if we took a pack train above Great Falls, and cut across lots now and then, checking up in our *Journal* all the way."

"That's the stuff!" exclaimed John. "Horses!"

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Lewis and Clark used horses for some distance, at the crossing," said Uncle Dick, "so I think we may dare do so. We want all the variety we can get, and all the fun we can get, too. What do you say, young gentlemen?"

"It sounds good to me," said Rob. "I'd like to see the mountains pretty well. You see, a great part of our lives has been spent in Alaska and the northern country, and we're just getting acquainted with our own country, you might say. The Rockies this far south must be fine in the early fall."

"It suits me," assented John. "I'd like to take the *Adventurer* along, but Lewis and Clark didn't take their boats through all the way, either."

"And if we had time," added Jesse, "we could run some river late in the fall, say from Great Falls down to here."

"All good," nodded Uncle Dick. Then turning to their new friend, "Suppose we cross our camp to Bismarck the morning of July 5th, tie up our boat there for you, and then go on in the way you suggest—motor and trailer?"

"Agreed," said the other. "I'll be there early that day."

"Which way shall we go?" asked Rob. "If

ON THE MISSOURI

we took the road along the Northern Pacific west, we could see the Bad Lands, and go through Medora, Theodore Roosevelt's old town."

The editor shook his head. "Bad, if there's rain," he said. "Besides, that takes you below the Missouri. I think we'd best go on the east side the river, north of Bismarck. We could swing out toward the Turtle Lakes, and then make more west, toward the Fort Berthold Reservation. From there we could maybe get through till we struck the Great Northern Railroad; and then we could get west to Buford, on the line, and on the river again. If we got lost we could find ourselves again some time."

"How long would it take?" inquired Rob.

"If it's two hundred and eighty-eight miles by the river, it would be maybe two hundred and fifty by trail. We could do it in a day, on a straightaway good road like one of the motor highways, but we'll have nothing of the sort. I'll say two days, three, maybe four—we'd know better when we got there."

"That sounds more adventurous," said Jesse. And what the youngest of them thought appealed to the others also.

"Very well. All set for the morning after

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the Fourth," said Uncle Dick. "And when we go back to Mandan be sure not to eat too much ice cream, for we're not apt to run across very many doctors on the way. And now we'd better get ready to camp here to-night. We can make Mandan by noon to-morrow—it's faster, downstream."

"On the way," said their friend, "I want you to go around to the coulee below town, where there's three or four tepees of Sioux in camp. What do they do? Oh, make little things to sell in town—and not above begging a little. There's one squaw we call Mary, who has been coming here a good many years. She makes about the finest moccasins we ever get. She made my wife a pair, out of buckskin white as snow. I don't know where she got it."

"The Sioux had parfleche soles to all their moccasins," said John, wisely. "All the buffalo and Plains Indians did. The forest Indians had soft soles."

"You're right, son," said the editor. "For modern bedroom moccasins, to sell to white women, Mary makes them all soft, with a shallow ankle flap. Most of the Indian men wear shoes now, but when she makes a pair of men's moccasins she always puts on the rawhide soles."

ON THE MISSOURI

You can see the hair on the bottoms, sometimes."

"Buffalo hair?" smiled Jesse.

"Well, no. The Indians use beef hide now. But they don't like it."

"Neither do I," said Jesse.

CHAPTER XVI

OLD DAYS ON THE RIVER

"NOT so bad, not so bad at all," was John's comment as they all sat around the camp fire on the evening of July 5th. They had spent two pleasant days in town and now were forty miles out into the Plains country above the railroad; they had pitched camp at the edge of a willow-lined stream which ran between steep bluffs whose tops rose level with the plain. The smoke of their camp fire drifted down the troughlike valley from their encampment. The boys had found enough clean wood for a broiling fire, and John just now had taken off the thick beefsteak which they had brought along with them.

"You will observe that this is from the tenderloin of the three-year-old fat buffalo cow that I killed this morning," said he. "I always did like buffalo. We will break open some marrow bones about midnight, and I'll grill some boss ribs for breakfast."

"And for luncheon," added Jesse, joining readily in the make-believe, "we'll try some of

ON THE MISSOURI

the cold roast of the last bighorn I killed, over in the breaks of the Missouri. Not so bad!"

Their friend from Mandan looked at them, smiling. "I hope you haven't shot any tame sheep," said he. "No, not a bad camp, except that the mosquitoes are eating me alive. How do these boys stand it the way they do?"

"Oh, they're tough," laughed Uncle Dick. "We've had so many trips up North together, where the mosquitoes really are bad, we've got immune, so we don't mind a little thing like this. It takes two or three years to get over fighting them. For the first year they almost drive a man crazy, up there in Alaska."

"I expect, sir, you'd better go inside the tent with our uncle to-night," said Rob. "We have our buffalo robes and bed rolls and don't need any tent, but if you drop the bar to the tent door, and take a wet sock to the mosquitoes that get in, I think you'll not be bothered."

"But how will you sleep, outside?"

"Oh, we pull a corner of the blanket over our faces if they get too bad. By nine or ten o'clock they'll be gone—until sunup; then they're the worst. If we had camped up on the rim it would have been better."

"I'm going up on the rim after supper,"

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

said Jesse, "to see if I can't find an antelope—I suppose you'd call it a jack rabbit. I saw three coveys of prairie chickens cross the road today. If it was legal, now!"

Indeed, an hour later the youngest of the party came in at dark, carrying a pair of long-legged jacks, one of them young and fat. "I always was good on antelopes," said he. "These were in at the edge of a farmer's clover field. I'm glad we're getting into good game country!"

"Yes," Uncle Dick said, "between the Mandans and the mouth of the Yellowstone, Lewis and Clark began to find the bighorn, which was new to them. And as we've said, they now were meeting the first 'white bears' or grizzlies. All along, from here to Great Falls, was the best grizzly country they found in all the way across."

"If only they were in there now!" said John.

"Why, would you dare tackle a grizzly?" smiled their friend. John did not say much.

"These boys have done it," replied their uncle for them. "I'd hate to be the bear. They shoot straight, and the rifles they have are far more powerful than the ones the first explorers had."

"We'll call this exploring," said Jesse, with

ON THE MISSOURI

sarcasm. "I'll have to get help to hang up my antelopes so they'll cool out.

"But, anyhow," he added, "this is as much fun as plugging along among the sand bars in the motor boat. We beat the oars, and now this gas wagon beats our boat motors!"

"Uncle Dick," suddenly interrupted Rob, "we've been talking about the fur trade on the river a hundred years ago. I understand the fur posts were supplied by steamboats, at the height of the fur trade, anyhow. Now, how long did it take a steamer in those days to make the run, say, from St. Louis to the mouth of the Yellowstone?"

"That's easy to answer," his uncle replied. "The records and logs of some of the old boats still exist in St. Louis, and while I was there I looked up some of them.

"Now as nearly as I can learn there was no exact way of estimating distances by any of those travelers—the speedometer was not invented, nor the odometer, nor the ship's log. Now I don't know how the steamboat captains got at it, but they kept a daily log of distance, and they had the different stopping places all logged for distance. We make it a little less than sixteen hundred miles to Mandan. The *Journal* makes it sixteen hundred and ten—

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

close enough. The river chart calls it fourteen hundred and fifty-two to the bridge; over fifty miles below the Mandan villages.

"But the *Journal* makes it eighteen hundred and eighty-eight miles to the mouth of the Yellowstone. My steamboat records call it seventeen hundred and sixty miles—more than a hundred miles shorter. At least, that was what the traders called it to Fort Union, which was just above the mouth of the Yellowstone, as nearly as now is known; you must bear in mind that practically every one of the old fur posts was long ago wiped out. How? Well, largely by the steamboats themselves! The captains were always short of wood. They tore down and burned up first one and then another of the early posts. Settlers did the rest.

"At first, as early as 1841, it took eighty days to do that seventeen hundred and sixty miles upstream, and twenty-one days to run back downstream. In 1845 they did it in forty-two days up, and fifteen down. In 1847 it was done in forty days up, and fourteen days down; and they didn't beat that much, if any."

"That's an average of about forty-four miles a day," said Rob, who was doing some figuring on his notebook. "Going down, about one hundred and twenty-three miles."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Why, they beat our average!" complained John. "We didn't climb her in much over forty, if that."

"Well, we could pick the way easier, but she had more power," said Rob. "Everybody knows a big boat beats a little one. But she didn't beat us much, at that."

"The *Adventurer's* a good boat," nodded Uncle Dick, "and I think on the whole we've got a pretty good idea of the travel of 1804 and 1805, or will have before we're done."

"But now, one thing or two I want you also to bear in mind. Life isn't all adventure. Commerce follows on the trail of adventure. The fur traders forgot the romance, and hurried in up the Missouri, as soon as they could. And what fur they did get! No wonder Great Britain was sorry to meet Lewis and Clark up here!

"There were a lot of important fur posts that fed into the Missouri. The mouth of the James River was a good post. Fort Pierre—on the Teton, down below—was the best post on the river except Union, at the Yellowstone. Pierre covered two and a half acres of ground, but Union was better built—she had twenty-foot palisades a foot square, and she stood two

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

hundred and forty by two hundred and twenty feet, with stone bastions at two corners, pierced for cannon, and a riflemen's banquette clear around inside.

"They were right in the middle of the Sioux and near the Blackfeet, and after the smallpox came on the river, the Indians got bitter and hated the thought of a white man. But they had only fur to trade for rifles and traps and blankets, and the white traders made the only market.

"I was speaking of Fort Pierre, because of a journal kept in 1832 by the trader at that place. It is largely a record of weather and water, but has a touch or so of interest now and then—I made some notes from it. Thus, I find that on June 24th the steamer *Yellowstone* arrived, down bound, and they put six hundred packs of buffalo robes on her. That boat on the next day had on board one thousand three hundred packs of robes and beaver. In the old trade a pack was ninety to one hundred pounds.

"On July 9th three bateaux got in from Fort Union with a lot of robes. They loaded on one bateau one hundred and twenty packs of beaver and other fur, and on another thirty packs of robes, and she was to take on one hun-

ON THE MISSOURI

dred and twenty to one hundred and thirty packs more at Yankton post.

"On July 11th four bateaux left Fort Pierre for St. Louis, and they carried three hundred and fifty-five packs of robes and ten thousand two hundred and thirty pounds of beaver. And on July 30th another bateau came down from Union with six thousand beaver skins on board.

"From this you can see something of the size of the big bateaux—or Mackinaws—of that time, and something of the size of the fur trade as well. And all the time the big river was outfitting the hardy pack-train men who brought out fortunes in beaver from the rivers of the Rockies. Great times, boys—great times! And all of that trade rested on the Lewis and Clark expedition.

"You now have seen how important the mouth of the Yellowstone was—where Fort Union was located in 1828. That was for a time pretty near the end of the road, just as it was for Lewis and Clark a quarter century earlier. Above there were the Blackfeet, and they were bad Indians. About the first man up in there was James Kipp.

"Now I want to tell you something very curious—one of those things now rapidly getting out of record and remembrance. James

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Kipp lived among the Mandans and married there. He had a son, Joe Kipp, whom he once took home to Illinois to educate, after he had left the trade and married a white woman. He loved Joe, but told him he must never let it be known that he was the Indian son of James Kipp, the respected white man.

"Well, the boy Joe couldn't stand that. He ran away up the river, and never came back. He went back to his mother, a Mandan woman. In later days, since the fur trade passed and the Indians all were put on reservations, Joe Kipp was the post trader for years. He was a bold trader and went into Canada at one time. He founded old Fort Whoop-up. He got to be worth some money in his stores, though always liberal with the Indians. He was the man who showed the engineers of the Great Northern Railroad the pass which they built through. It is the lowest railroad pass of them all, though the one farthest north of all our railroads over the Rockies.

"Now, I knew Joe Kipp very well and often met him on the Blackfeet Reservation. He lived in a big frame house there, had a bathtub and a Chinaman cook, and showed his Indians how to 'follow the path of the white man.'

ON THE MISSOURI

"But what I want you to remember is this: Joe Kipp had his Mandan mother with him until she died. I have seen her, too, a very tall, old woman, and wild as a hawk. Joe built her a little cabin all her own, where no one else ever went. In her little cabin she spent her last years as she had lived in her earlier days among the Mandans, making moccasins for Joe, decorating tobacco pouches and fire bags with beads and porcupine quills. I have a fire bag of hers that Joe gave me, and I prize it very much. She no longer had the buffalo, but on the rafters of her lodge she had her dried meat hanging, and the interior was something no man living will see again.

"Joe Kipp's Mandan mother was the last living soul of the pure-blood Mandan tribe, one of the most curious and puzzling ones of the West—they were a light-colored people, the children with light eyes; no one knows how they came on the Missouri. But the smallpox got them almost all. They went crazy, jumped in the river—died—passed.

"Well, Joe's mother, so he said, was the last, a very old woman, I presume nearly a hundred then. Often she would take her blanket and go out on a hilltop and sit there motionless hours at a time, with her blanket over her face

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

—thinking, thinking, I presume, over the days that you and I are studying together now.

“And just a little while ago I heard of Joe Kipp’s death, too. His mother died some years earlier. So that is some Mandan history which I presume even our Mandan friend here never has heard before—about the last of the Mandans, who came down, broken and helpless, even into our own time.”

“Don’t!” suddenly said Rob. “Please don’t! It makes me sad.”

They fell silent as presently each found his way to his blankets.

CHAPTER XVII

AT THE YELLOWSTONE

THE motor-car journey of the party had not much of eventfulness, being practically, most of the way, through a farm or range country where roads of least passable sort led them in the general northwesterly direction which they desired to take. All three of the young explorers could drive, so they took turns occasionally, while the editor sat in the back seat and conversed with Uncle Dick.

Beyond a few grouse and rabbits, with a half dozen coyotes, they saw no game except wild fowl on the sloughs. The cabins and tepees on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation afforded them a change of scene, and they were delighted to find three of the native Mandan earth lodges, one nearly fifty feet in diameter. They learned that the remnants of the Mandan tribe, few in number and comprising few, if any, pure blood, were located with reservation here, and were clinging to their tribal customs the best they could.

“Well, here’s what Patrick Gass says about

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the old Mandan huts and how they were built—and he was a carpenter and so ought to know.” John was always ready with his quotations:

“A Mandane’s circular hut is spacious. I measured the one I lodged in, and found it 90 feet from the door to the opposite side. The whole space is first dug out about $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the surface of the earth. In the center is the square fireplace, about five feet on each side, dug out about two feet below the surface of the ground flat. The lower part of the hut is constructed by erecting strong posts about six feet out of the ground, at equal distances from each other, according to the proposed size of the hut, as they are not all of the same dimensions. Upon these are laid logs as large as the posts, reaching from post to post to form the circle. On the outer side are placed pieces of split wood seven feet long, in a slanting direction, one end resting on the ground, the other leaning against the cross-logs or beams. Upon these beams rest rafters about the thickness of a man’s leg, and 12 to 15 feet long, slanting enough to drain off the rain, and laid so close to each other as to touch. The upper ends of the rafters are supported upon stout pieces of squared timber, which last are supported by four thick posts about five feet in circumference, 15 feet out of the ground and 15 feet asunder, forming a square. Over these squared timbers others of equal size are laid, crossing them at right angles, leaving an opening about four feet square. This serves for chimney and windows, as there are no other openings to admit light, and when it rains even this hole is covered over with a canoe (bull boat) to prevent the rain from injuring their gammine (sic) and earthen pots. The whole roof is well thatched with the

ON THE MISSOURI

small willows in which the Missourie abounds, laid on to the thickness of six inches or more, fastened together in a very compact manner and well secured to the rafters. Over the whole is spread about one foot of earth, and around the wall, to the height of three or four feet, is commonly laid up earth to the thickness of three feet, for security in case of an attack and to keep out the cold. The door is five feet broad and six high, with a covered way or porch on the outside of the same height as the door, seven feet broad and ten in length. The doors are made of raw buffalo hide stretched upon a frame and suspended by cords from one of the beams which form the circle. Every night the door is barricaded with a long piece of timber supported by two stout posts set in the ground in the inside of the hut, one on each side of the door."

"Well," remarked Jesse, "that sort of a house was big enough, so it is no wonder they could keep their horses in there with them, too, in the wintertime. And they fed them cottonwood limbs when there wasn't any grass to eat."

"Yes," remarked Uncle Dick, "that's what we call adjusting to an environment. I will say these Mandans were rather efficient on the whole, and not bad engineers and architects."

They did not tarry long, although they made their second encampment within the lines of the old Fort Berthold Reservation, for they found all the Indians wearing white men's clothing, and using wagons and farm imple-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

ments, and Jesse said they had more Indianish Indians in Alaska.

Now they bore rather sharply to the north, feeling for the line of the railway, which they struck at a village about midway between the Little Knife and the White Earth Rivers. The early afternoon of their fourth day brought them back once more to the sight of the Missouri, at the town of Buford, near the Montana line and opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone.

Following their usual custom, they made camp outside the vicinity of the town, after purchasing the supplies they needed for the day and for the return trip of their obliging friend from Mandan, who now reluctantly decided that he could accompany them no farther.

"I'd rather go on with you than do anything I know," said he, "but it's going to be quite a trip, and I won't have time, even if we could get through with a car."

Uncle Dick nodded. "Really the best way to do this would be to take ship again here and follow the river up the Great Falls," he said; "but by the time we got a boat rigged and had made the run up—best part of six hundred miles—we'd be almost a month further into the summer—because the river is swifter above

ON THE MISSOURI

here. They made good time, but it was mostly cordelle work. And, using gas motors, the boys wouldn't have much chance of any real sport and exercise, which, of course, I want them to have every summer when possible.

"Get your map, John—the big government map—and let's have a look at this country in west of here."

John complied. They all bent over the map, which they spread down on the floor of the tent. Their gasoline camp lantern shed its brilliant light over them all as they bent down in study of the map.

"You'll see now that we're almost at the farthest north point on the Missouri River. From here it runs almost west to the Great Falls, and then almost south. Now our new railroad (the Great Northern Railroad) will take us to the Great Falls of the Missouri, but it by no means follows the Missouri. On the contrary, a little over two hundred miles from here, I'd guess, it strikes the Milk River—as Lewis and Clark called it—and follows that river half across the state of Montana. It would carry us out to the Blackfeet Reservation, and what is now Glacier Park—my own hunting ground among the Blackfeet, where I knew Joe Kipp—but that is entirely off the map for us."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Why, sure it is!" said Jesse, following the line of the river with his finger. "Look it! It runs away south, hundreds of miles, into the southwest corner of the state; and the railroad goes almost to Canada. And there's a lot of river between here and Great Falls, too—bad water, you say?"

"And see here where the Yellowstone goes!" added Rob. "It's away below the Missouri, a hundred, a hundred and fifty miles in places—no railroads and no towns."

"No," remarked their leader, "but one of the real wild places of the West in its day—as cow range or hunting range, that wild and broken country in there had no superior, and not many men know all of it even now. Part of it is wonderfully beautiful.

"At no part of the journey did Lewis and Clark have more exciting adventures than in precisely this country that we've got to skip, too. The buffalo fairly swarmed, and elk and antelope and bighorn sheep and black-tail deer were all around them all the time. It was a wonderful new world for them. How many of the great fighting grizzlies they met in that strip of the river, I wouldn't like to say, but in almost every instance it meant a fight, until half the crew would no longer go after a

ON THE MISSOURI

grizzly, they were so scared of them. One they shot through eight times, and it chased the whole party even then. I tell you, those bears were bad!

"But we'd not see one now—they're all gone, every one. Nor would we see a bighorn—besides, they are protected by a continuous closed season in Montana. Pretty country, yes, wild and bold and risky; but better coming down than going up. We miss some grand scenery, but save a month's time, maybe.

"But now see here—about halfway out to the Blackfeet is Havre Junction. There we can take a train southwest to the town of Great Falls; and above there we can stop at the mouth of the Marias River. Between there and the Falls is Fort Benton, and that is one of the most important points, in a historical way, there was on the whole river, although its glory departed long ago. From there we'd get to our pack train and be off for the head of the Missouri. What do you think, Rob?"

Rob was silent for a time. "Well," said he, at length, "I think we'd get pretty much a repetition of the river work, and not much sport—hard river, too.

"Now, it would be fine to go to old Benton by river, to the head of navigation; but we

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

know that Fort Benton was not one of the early fur posts—indeed, it came in when the last of the buffalo were being killed. It was where the traveling traders got their goods, and where the bull outfits got their freight in 1863 for the placer mines of Montana and was the outfit place for Bozeman and all those early points. But that was after the fur trade was over.”

“That’s right,” said Uncle Dick. “First came the explorers; then the fur traders; then the miners; then the cow men; then the farmers. The end of the buffalo came in 1883—a million robes that year; and the next, none at all—the most terrible wild-life tragedy that ever was known. After that came the cattle and the sheep and the irrigation men.”

He sat musing for the time.

“But listen now to a little more of the early stuff. You, Jesse, do you follow up the Yellowstone with your finger till you come to the mouth of the Big Horn River. Got it?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Jesse. “Here she is.”

“All right. Now, at that place, in the year 1807—the next year after Lewis and Clark got back home—a shrewd St. Louis trader by name of Manuel Lisa, of Spanish descent he was, heard all those beaver stories, and he pushed up the Missouri and up the Yellow-

ON THE MISSOURI

stone, and built a post called Fort Manuel there. He wanted to trade with the Blackfeet and Crows both, but found those tribes were enemies. He couldn't hold the fort. He dropped back to St. Louis and formed the first of the great fur companies, the Missouri River Company. They were the pioneers of many later companies.

"The Missouri River Company had their post at the Three Forks of the Missouri—away up yonder, eight hundred miles from here—as early as 1810; that was crowding Lewis and Clark pretty fairly close, eh? Well, then came the Rocky Mountain Company, and the American Fur Company, and the Pacific Fur Company, and the Columbia Fur Company, and I don't know how many other St. Louis partnerships upriver—not mentioning the pack-train outfits under many names—and so all at once, as though by magic, there were posts strung clear to the head of the river—one hundred and forty of them, as I have told you. And of them all you could hardly find a trace of one of them to-day.

"There's dispute even as to the site of Fort Union, which was just above here and up the river a little above the Yellowstone. That was built in 1828.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Long before that, and for twenty years after that, the fur traders kept on building, until the mouth of every good-sized river running into the Missouri had not only one, but sometimes three or four posts, all competing all or part of the time! Risky business it was. Some made fortunes; most of them died broke. Well, I reckon they had a good run for their money, eh?"

"And when did it end?" asked the Mandan friend, who had sat an absorbed listener to a story, the most of which was new to him.

"It has not ended yet," answered Uncle Dick. "St. Louis is to-day the greatest fur market in the world, though now skunk and coon and rat have taken the place of beaver and buffalo and wolf. But within the past four years a muskrat pelt has sold for five dollars. In 1832 the average price for the previous fifteen years had been twenty cents for a rat hide—many a boy in my time thought he was rich if he got ten cents. A buffalo robe averaged three dollars; a beaver pelt, four dollars; an otter, three dollars. Think of what they bring now! Well, the demand combs the country, that's all.

"But in 1836 beaver slumped—because that was the year the silk hat was invented. Did you know that? And in 1883 the buffalo robes

ON THE MISSOURI

ended. I'd say that 1850 really was about the end of the big days of the early fur trade—what we call the upper-river trade.”

Rob put his hand down over the map. “And here it was,” said he, “in this country west of here, up the Yellowstone, up the Missouri, all over and in between!”

“Quite right, yes,” his companion nodded. “Of all the days of romance and adventure in the Far West, those were the times and this was the place—from here west, up the great waterway and its branches.

“No one can estimate the value of the Missouri River to the United States. It made more history for us than the Mississippi itself. It made our first maps—the fur trade did that. It led us across and got us Oregon. It led us to the placers which settled Montana. It took the first horses and wagons and plows into the upper country in its day, as well as the first rifles and steel traps. It brought us into war with the Indians, and helped us win the war. It carried our hunters up to the buffalo, and carried all the buffalo down, off from the face of the earth. And it rolls and boils and tumbles on its way now as it did when the great bateaux swept down its flood, over a hundred miles a day, loaded with robes and furs.”

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I wish we could see it all!" grumbled Jesse, again.

"You can see it all now, Jess," said his uncle, "better than you could if you plugged up its stream without looking at a map or book. And even if you did look at both, you've got to see the many different periods the old Missouri has had in its history, and balance one against the other.

"Dates are not of so much importance, but reasons for great changes are important. If I had to select just one date in Western history, do you know what that would be?"

"Eighteen hundred and four, when our men started up with the flag!" said Rob.

Uncle Dick shook his head.

"Eighteen hundred and six, when they got back," ventured Jesse.

"No."

"Eighteen hundred and forty-eight, when they found gold in California!" said John.

"No! Great years, yes, and the discovery of gold was a great event in changing all the country. But to the man who really has studied all the story of the Missouri River, I believe that the year 1836 was about the pivotal date. And it only marks the invention of the silk hat! But that year the plow began to take the

ON THE MISSOURI

place of the steel trap in the way of making a living in the West. That was the year, I might say, when the mystery and romance of the unknown West found their end, and the day began of what we call business and civilization.

"That's all. Go to bed, fellows. Our friend has been most kind to us, and we have to get him a good breakfast in the morning, since he must leave us then."

The Mandan friend rose and put out his hand. "I want to thank you, sir," he said. "I'm in your debt. I wish my own boys were along with this party."

The next day they parted and the young Alaskans were speeding west by rail, making the great jump of about six hundred miles, between the mouth of the Yellowstone and the Great Falls of the Missouri.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHERE THE ROAD FORKED

“WELL, fellows,” began Rob, “this is a place I’ve always wanted to see. I’ve read about old Fort Benton many a time. Now, here we are!”

The little party stood curiously regarding an old and well-nigh ruined square structure of sun-dried brick, not far from which lay yet more dilapidated remnants of what once had been the walls and buildings of an old abode inclosure. They were on their third day out from the mouth of the Yellowstone River, having come by rail, and were spending the day at Fort Benton, between the junction point of Havre and the modern city of Great Falls.

“There’s not much of it left,” scoffed Jesse. “I don’t call this so much of a fort. You could pretty near push over all that’s left of it.”

“Not so, Jess,” replied Rob, the older of the three boys. “Nothing can push over the walls of old Fort Benton! It has foundations in history.”

“Oh, history!” said Jesse. “That’s all right.

ON THE MISSOURI

But I'm sore we didn't run the river up from Buford. Just when we hit some wild stuff, we take the cars! Besides, we might have seen some white bears or some bighorn sheep."

John smiled at Jesse. "Not a chance, Jess," said he, "though it's true we have jumped over what was the most interesting country we had struck till then—castles and towers and walls and fortresses; and as you say, plenty of game. Tell him about it, Uncle Dick. He's grouching."

Uncle Dick smiled and put his hand on Jesse's curly head. "No, he isn't," said he. "He just isn't satisfied with jack rabbits where there used to be grizzlies and bighorns. I don't blame him.

"Yet to the east of us, to the end of the river at Buford, to the south along the Yellowstone, and on all the great rivers that the cowmen used for range—along the Little Missouri and the Musselshell and the Judith and countless other streams whose names you have heard—lay the greatest game country the world ever saw, the best outdoor country in the world!

"This was the land of the Wild West Indian and buffalo days, so wild a country that it never lived down its reputation. Buffalo, antelope, and elk ranged in common in herds of

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

hundreds of thousands, while in the rough shores of the river lived countless bighorns, hundreds of grizzlies, and a like proportion of buffalo and antelope as well, not to mention the big wolves and other predatories. Yes, a great wilderness it was!"

"And we jumped it!" said Jesse.

"Yes, because I knew we'd save time, and we have to do that, for we're not out for two years, you see.

"Now look at your notes and at the *Journal*. It took Lewis and Clark thirty-five days to get here from the mouth of the Yellowstone, and we've done it in one, you might say. The railroad calls it three hundred and sixty-seven miles."

"Well, the *Journal* calls it more," broke in Rob, "yet it sticks right to the river."

"And now they began to travel," added John. "They did twenty—eighteen—twenty-five—seventeen miles a day right along, more'n they did below Mandan, a lot."

"They make it six hundred and forty-one miles from the Yellowstone to the Marias, which is below where we are now. That's about eighteen miles a day. Yet they all say the river current is much stiffer."

"We'd have found it stiff in places," said

ON THE MISSOURI

their leader. "But the reason they did so well—on paper—was that now they couldn't sail the canoes very well, and so did a great deal of towing. The shores were full of sharp rocks and the going was rough, and they had only moccasins—they complained bitterly of sore feet.

"Their hardships made them overestimate the distances they did—and they did overestimate them, very much. When we were tracking up on the Rat Portage, in the ice water, at the Arctic Circle, don't you remember we figured on double what we had actually done? A man's wife corrected him on how long they had been married. He said it was twenty years, and she said it was ten, by the records. 'Well, it seems longer,' he said. Same way, when they did ten miles a day stumbling on the tracking line, they called it twenty. It seemed longer.

"Now, when the river commission measured these distances accurately, they called it seventeen hundred and sixty miles from the mouth of the river to the mouth of the Yellowstone, and not eighteen hundred, as the *Journal* has it. And from Buford to Benton, by river, is not six hundred and forty-one miles, as the *Journal* makes it, but only five hundred and

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

three. So the first white men through those cañons and palisades below us yonder were one hundred and thirty-eight miles over in their estimates, or more than one-fourth of the real distance.

"This tendency to overestimate distances is almost universal among explorers who set the first distances, and it ought to be reckoned as a factor of error, like the dip of the magnetic needle. But they did their best. And we want to remember that they were the first white men to come up this river, whereas we are the last!"

"Anyhow," resumed Rob, "we are at old Benton now."

"Yes, and I think even Jesse will agree, when we stop to sum up here, that this is a central point in every way, and more worth while as a standing place than any we would have passed in the river had we run it.

"This is the heart of the buffalo country, and the heart of the old Blackfoot hunting range—the most dreaded of all the tribes the early traders met. We're above the breaks of the Missouri right here. Look at the vast Plains. This was the buffalo pasture of the Blackfeet. The Crows lay below, on the Yellowstone.

"Now as they came up through the Bad

ON THE MISSOURI

Lands and the upper breaks of the big river, the explorers gave names to a lot of creeks and buttes, most of which did not stick. Two of them did stick—the Judith and the Marias. Clark called the first Judith's river, after Miss Julia Hancock, of Virginia, the lady whom he later married. Her friends all called her Judy, and Clark figured it ought to be Judith.

"In the same way Lewis called this river, near whose mouth we now are standing, Maria's River, after his cousin, Miss Maria Wood. Clark's river, famous in military days, and now famous as the wheat belt of the Judith Basin, lost the possessive and is now plain Judith. That of Meriwether Lewis still has all the letters, but is spelled Marias River, without the possessive apostrophe. So these stand even to-day, the names of two Virginia girls, and no doubt will remain there while the water runs or the grass grows, as the Indians say."

"But even now you've forgotten something, Uncle Dick," interrupted John. "You said this was the Forks of the Road. How do you mean?"

"Yes. This later proved one of the great strategic points of the West. As you know, this was the head of steamboat navigation, and the outfitting point for the bull trains that

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

supplied all the country west and south and north of us. No old post is more famous. But that is not all.

"I have reference now, really, not to Fort Benton, but to the mouth of the Marias River, below here. Now, see how nearly, even to-day, the Marias resembles the Missouri River. Suppose you were captain, Jess, and you had no map and nothing to go by, and you came to these two rivers and didn't have any idea on earth which was the one coming closest to the Columbia, and had no idea where either of them headed—now, what would you do?"

"Huh!" answered Jesse, with no hesitation at all. "I know what I'd have done."

"Yes? What, then?"

"Why, I'd have asked that Indian girl, Sac-ágawea, that's what I'd have done. She knew all this country, you say."

"By Jove! Not a bit bad, Jess, come to think of it. But look at your *Journal*. You'll find that at precisely the first time they needed to ask her something they could not! The girl was very sick, from here to above the Great Falls. They thought she was going to die, and it's a wonder she didn't, when you read what all they gave her by way of medicines. She was out of her head part of the time. They

ON THE MISSOURI

never asked her a thing on the choice of these rivers!

"Well now, what did they do? They spent more than a week deciding, and it was time well spent. They sent out small parties up each fork a little way, and the men all thought the Marias, or right-hand fork, was the true Missouri. Then Clark was sent up the south fork, which was clearer than the other. He went thirty-five miles. If he had gone twenty miles farther, he'd have been at the Great Falls; and the Minnetaree Indians had told of those falls, and of an eagle's nest there, though they said nothing about the river to the north. Chaboneau had never been here. His wife was nearly dead. No one could help.

"Lewis took a few men and went up the Marias for about sixty miles. They came back down the Marias, and decided on the left-hand fork, against the judgment of every man but Clark.

"His reasoning is good. The men all pointed out that the right-hand fork was roily, boiling, and rolling, exactly like the Missouri up which they had come, whereas the other fork was clear. But Lewis said that this showed that the Marias ran through plains country and did not lead close to the Rockies, from which the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

water would run clearer; and they did not want to skirt the mountains northerly, but to cross them, going west.

"Lewis had an old English map, made by a man named Arrowsmith, based on reports of a Hudson's Bay trader named Fidler, who had gone a little south of the Saskatchewan and made some observations. Now look at your *Journal*, and see what Lewis thought of Mr. Fidler.

"The latter marked a detached peak at forty-five degrees latitude. Yet Lewis—who all this time has been setting down his own latitude and longitude from his frequent observations—makes the Marias as forty-seven degrees, twenty-four minutes, twelve and eight-tenths seconds. He says:

"The river must therefore turn much to the south between this and the rocky mountain to have permitted Mr. Fidler to have passed along the eastern border of these mountains as far south as nearly 45° without even seeing it. . . . Capt. Clark says its course is S.29 W. and it still appeared to bear considerably to the W. of South. . . . I think therefore that we shall find that the Missouri enters the rocky mountains to the North of 45° . We did take the liberty of placing his discoveries or at least the Southern extremity of them about a degree farther North . . . and I rather suspect that actual observations will take him at least one other degree further North. The general course of Marias river . . . is 69° W. 59'."

ON THE MISSOURI

“Lewis also figured that Fidler in his map showed only small streams coming in from the west, ‘and the presumption is very strong that those little streams do not penetrate the Rocky Mountains to such distance as would afford rational grounds for a conjecture that they had their sources near any navigable branch of the Columbia.’ He was right in that—and he says those little creeks may run into a river the Indians called the Medicine River. Now that is the Sun River, which does come in at the Falls, but which Lewis had never seen!

“Again, the Minnetaree Indians had told him, in their long map-making talks at the Mandan winter quarters, that the river near the Falls was clear, as he now saw this stream. The Minnetarees told him the Missouri River interlocked with the Columbia. And as he was now straight west of the Minnetarees, he figured that when they went hunting to the head of the Missouri, as they had, they couldn’t have passed a river big as this south fork without mentioning it. And the Indians said that the Falls were a ‘little south of the sunset’ from the Mandans—and Lewis had his latitude to show he was still on that line and ought to hold to it.

“Lastly, he reasoned that so large a river

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

must penetrate deeply into the Rockies—and that was what he wanted. He knew it could not rise in dry plains. So, relying on his Minnetarees and his horse sense, and not on Mr. Fidler, Lewis refused to go any farther north, because he could not figure out there a big river penetrating into the Rockies. He was absolutely right, as well as very shrewd and wise.

“Now, reasoning at first shot, the *voyageurs* would have gone up the Marias. Cruzatte especially, their best riverman, was certain the Marias was the true Missouri. They would then maybe have met the Blackfeet and would never have crossed the Rockies; which would have meant failure, if not death; whereas this cold-headed, careful young man, Meriwether Lewis, by a chain of exact reasoning on actual data, went against the judgment of the entire party and chose the left-hand fork, which we know is the true Missouri; and which we’ll find hard enough to follow to its head, even to-day.

“Think over that, boys. Do you begin to see what a man must be, to be a leader? We have had plenty of Army men in Western exploration since then, plenty of engineers who could spell. But in all the records you’ll not find one example of responsibility handled as

ON THE MISSOURI

quietly and decisively as that. You must remember the pressure he was under. It would have been so easy to take the united conviction of all these old, grizzled, experienced *voyageurs* and hunters.

“Well, if Clark and he argued over it, at least that is not known. But all the men took the decision of the two leaders without a whimper. I think the personnel of that party must have been extraordinary. And their leaders proved their judgment later.

“Now, with poor Sacágawea expected to die, and with all the responsibility on their shoulders, our captains acted as though they had no doubts. If they did have, Lewis solved it all when he ascended the Marias on his way home next year.

“Now the water was getting swift. They knew nothing of what was ahead, but their load was heavy. So now they hid their biggest boat in the willows on an island, at the mouth of the Marias, and dug a *cache* for a great deal of their outfit—axes, ammunition, casks of provisions, and much superfluous stuff. They dug this bottle shaped, as the old fur traders did, lined it with boughs and grass and hides, filled it in and put back the cap sod—all the dirt had been piled on skins, so as not to show.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Stores would keep for years when buried carefully in this way.

"So now, lighter of load, but still game—with Cruzatte playing the fiddle for the men to dance of evenings—on June 12th they 'set out and proceeded on,' leaving this great and historical fork of the water road on the morning of June 12th, with Sacágawea so very sick that the captains took tender care of her all the trip, though they speak slightly of Chaboneau, her husband, who seems to have been a bit of a mutt. One of the men has a felon on his hand; another with toothache has taken cold in his jaw; another has a tumor and another a fever. Three canoes came near being lost; and it rained. But they 'proceeded on,' and on that day they first saw the Rockies, full and fair! And three days later Lewis found the Great Falls, hearing the noise miles away, and seeing the great cloud of mist arising above the main fall.

"And then they found the eagle's nest on the cottonwood island, of which the Minnetarees had told them. And then Sacágawea got well, and gave the O.K. after her delirium had gone! And then every man, woman, and child in that party agreed that their leaders were safe to follow!

ON THE MISSOURI

"It took them one month to get over that eighteen miles portage. That made five weeks they had lost here out of direct travel. But they never did lose courage, never did reason wrong, and never did go back one foot. Leadership, my boys! And both those captains, Lewis especially, had a dozen close calls for death, with bears, floods, rattlesnakes, gunshot, and accidents of all kinds. Their poor men also were in bad case many a time, but they held through. No more floggings now, this side of Mandan—maybe both men and captains had learned something about discipline."

Their leader ceased for the time, and turned, hat in hand, to the ruined quadrangle of adobe, the remnants of old Fort Benton. The boys also for a moment remained silent. Jesse approached and touched the sleeve of his Uncle Dick.

"I wouldn't have missed this for anything," said he. "I can see how they all must have felt when they got here, where they could see out over the country once more. Do you suppose it was right here that they stood?"

John was ready with his copy of the *Journal*, which now the boys all began to prize more and more.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Here it is," said he, "all set down in the finest story book I ever read in all my life. Captain Lewis and Captain Clark say they

"stroled out to the top of the hights in the fork of these rivers, from whence we had an extensive and most enchanting view. The country in every direction about was one vast plain in which innumerable herds of Buffalow were seen attended by their shepperds the wolves; the solatary antelope which now had there young were distributed over its face, some herds of Elk were also seen; the verdure perfectly cloathed the ground, the wether was plesent and fair; to the South we saw a range of lofty mountains which we supposed to be a continuation of the Snow Mountains stretching themselves from S.E. to N.W. terminating abruptly about S.West from us, these were partially covered with snow; behind these Mountains and at a great distance a second and more lofty range of mountains appeared to strech across the country in the same direction with the others, reaching from West, to the N. of N.W.—where their snowy tops lost themselves beneath the horizon, the last range was perfectly covered with snow.'"

"Does it check up, boys?" Uncle Dick smiled. "I think it does, except that our old ruins are not right where they then stood on the Missouri. The river mouth is below here. There is a high tongue of land between the Teton River, just over there, where it runs close along the Missouri, two or three hundred yards away, but I hardly think that was where they stood.

ON THE MISSOURI

“But though the works of man have changed many times, and themselves been changed by time, the works of God are here, as they were in June of 1805—except that the wild game is gone forever.

“Lewis or Clark could not dream that in 1812 a steamboat would go down the Ohio and the Mississippi; nor that some day a steamboat would land here, close to the Marias River.

“But after Lewis and Clark the fur traders poured up here. Then came the skin hunters and their Mackinaws, following the bull boats which took some *voyageurs* downstream. Then the river led the trails west, and the bull outfits followed the pack trains. So when the adventurers found gold at the head of the Missouri they had a lane well blazed, surely.

“Fort Benton was not by any means the first post to be located at or near this great point, the mouth of the Marias. In 1831 James Kipp, the father of my friend, Joe Kipp, put up a post here, but he did not try to hold it. The next year D. D. Mitchell built Fort McKenzie, about six miles above the Marias, on the left bank—quite a stiff fort, one hundred and twenty by one hundred and forty feet, stockaded—and this stuck till 1843. Then their continual troubles with the Blackfeet drove them

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

out. Then there was Fort Lewis, in the neighborhood, somewhere, in 1845.

"Fort Benton was put up in 1850. And as the early stockades of Booneville and Harrodsburg and Nashville in Kentucky were on 'Dark and bloody ground,' so ought the place where we now are standing be called the dark and bloody ground of the Missouri River, for this indeed was a focus of trouble and danger, even before the river trade made Benton a tough town."

"Well, the glory of old Benton is gone!" said Rob, at last. "Just the same, I am glad we came here. So this is all there is left of it!"

"Yes, all there is left of the one remaining bastion, or corner tower. It was not built of timber, but of adobe, which lasted better and was as good a defense and better. Many a time the men of Benton have flocked down to meet the boat, wherever she was able to land; and many a wild time was here—for in steamboat days alcohol was a large part of every cargo. The last of the robes were traded for in alcohol, very largely. And by 1883, after the rails had come below, the last of the hides were stripped from the last of the innumerable herds of buffalo that Lewis and Clark saw here, at the great fork of the road into the Rockies;

ON THE MISSOURI

and soon the last pelt was baled from the beaver. If you go to the Blackfeet now you find them a thinned and broken people, and the highest ambition of their best men is to dress up in modern beef-hide finery and play circus Indian around the park hotels.

"Well, this was their range, young excellencies, and this was the head of the disputed ground between the Crows, Nez Percés, Flat-heads, and Shoshonis, all of whom knew good buffalo country when they saw it.

"And yet, what luck our first explorers had! They surely did have luck, for they had good guidance of the Minnetarees among the Mandans, and then, from the time they left the Mandans until the next fall, beyond the Three Forks of the Missouri, they never saw an Indian of any sort! At the Great Falls, a great hunting place, they found encampments not more than ten days or so old, but not a soul.

"Thus endeth the lesson for to-day! I'm sorry we haven't a camp to go to to-night instead of a hotel, but I promise to mend that matter for you in a day or so, if Billy Williams is up from Bozeman with his pack train, as I wired him. I said the fifteenth, and this is the thirteenth, so we've two days for the Falls. I

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

wish we didn't know where they were! I wish I didn't know the Marias isn't the Missouri. I wish—well, at least I can wish that old Fort Benton was here and the whistle of the steamboat was blowing around the bend!"

"Don't, sir!" said Rob. "Please don't!"

"No," said John. "To-day is to-day."

"All the same," said Jesse, "all the same ——"

CHAPTER XIX

AT THE GREAT FALLS

“THE only thing,” said Jesse, as the three young companions later stood together on the bank of the river, looking out; “the only thing is ——”

He did not finish his sentence, but stood, his hands thrust into the side pockets of his jacket, his face not wholly happy.

“Yes, Jesse; but what is the only thing?” John smiled, and Rob, tall and neat in his Scout uniform, also smiled as he turned to the youngest of their party. They were alone, Uncle Dick having gone to town to see about the pack train. They had walked up from their camp below the flourishing city of Great Falls.

“Well, it’s all right, I suppose,” replied Jesse. “I suppose they have to have cities, of course. I suppose they have to have those big smelters over there and all those other things. Maybe it’s not the same. The buffalo are not here, nor the elk—though the *Journal* says hundreds of buffalo were washed over the falls and drowned, right along. Then, the bears are

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

not here any more, though it was right here that they were worst; they had to fight them all the time, and the only wonder was that no one was killed, for those bears were *bad*, believe me ——”

“Sure, they must have been,” assented John. “There were so many dead buffalo, below the falls, where they washed ashore, that the grizzlies came in flocks, and didn’t want to be disturbed or driven away from their grub. And these were the first boats that ever had come up that river, the first white men. So they jumped them. Why, over yonder above the falls were the White Bear Islands; so many bears on them, they kept the camp so scared up all the time, they had to make up a boat party and go over and hunt them off. They used to swim this river like it was a pond, those bears! They kept the party on the alert all day and all night. They had a dozen big fights with them.”

“Humph!” Jesse waved an arm to the broad expanse of flat water above the great dam of the power company. “Is that so? Well, that’s what I mean. Where’s the big tree with the black eagle’s nest? How do we know this is the big portage of the Missouri at all? No islands, no eagle. Yet you know very well it was the sight of that eagle’s nest that made

ON THE MISSOURI

Lewis and Clark know for sure that they were on the right river. The Indians didn't say anything about the Marias River being there at all; they never mentioned that to either Clark or Lewis when they made their maps in the winter with the Mandans. But they did mention that eagle nest on the island at the big falls—they thought everybody would notice that—and when you come to think of it, that did nail the thing to the map—no getting around the nest on the island at the falls.

"Oh, I suppose this town's all right, way towns go. Only thing is, they ought not to have spoiled the island and the eagle nest with their old dam. How do we know this is the place?"

"Well, we'll have to chance that, Jess," said Rob. "Quite a drop here, anyhow, all these cascades. If we'd brought the *Adventurer* all the way up the river from Mandan, and got to the head of the rapids, I guess we'd think it was the place to portage."

"Yes; and where'd we get any cottonwood tree around here, to cut off wheels for our boat wagon?" demanded John. "Eighteen miles and more, it was, that they portaged, after they'd dug their second big *cache* and hid their stuff and covered up the white perogue

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

at the head of their perogue navigation (they'd left the big red perogue at the Marias).

"And it took them a solid month to do that eighteen miles. The little old portage right here was the solidest jolt they'd had, all the way up the river to here—two thousand five hundred and ninety-three miles they called it, to the mouth of the Medicine River; which means the Sun River, that comes in just above the falls. Portage? Well, I'll call it some portage, even for us, if we had to make it!"

"Huh! Dray her out and put her on bicycle wheels and hitch her to a flivver and haul her around—two or three whole hours! Mighty risky and adventurous, isn't it? I want my bears! Especially I want my eagle! I've been counting on that old black eagle, all the way up, cordelling from the mouth of the Yellowstone."

"Well," resumed Rob, "at least they've named the Black Eagle Falls here after him. They've honored him with a dam and a bridge and a power house and a smelter and a few such things. And if we'd got here a little earlier—any time up to 1866 or 1872, or even later, maybe, we'd have seen Mr. Eagle, and he'd have shown us that this was his place."

ON THE MISSOURI

"I know it!" broke in John. "You didn't get that from the *Journal*. That's another book, later."¹

"Well, it said that Captain Reynolds of the army saw that eagle nest on the cottonwood tree on the island in 1866, and he thought it like enough was Lewis's eagle. And then in 1872 T. P. Roberts, in his survey, was just below those falls, and a big eagle sailed out from its nest in the old broken cottonwood, on the island below the falls, and it tackled him! He says it came and lit on the ground near him and showed fight. Then it flew around, not ten feet away, and dropped its claws almost in his face. He was going to shoot it. One of his men did shoot at it. Well, I suppose some fellow did shoot it, not long after that. I'd not like to have the thought on my mind that I'd been the man to kill the Meriwether Lewis black eagle." Rob spoke seriously, and added:

"Yet in Alaska the government pays a fifty-cent bounty on eagle heads, and they killed six thousand in one year—maybe several times that, in all, for all I know—because the eagles eat salmon! Well, that didn't save the salmon. The Fraser River, even, isn't a salmon river

¹ *Trail of Lewis and Clark*, Olin D. Wheeler, 1904.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

any more; and you know how our canneries have dropped."

"Poor old eagle!" said Jesse. "Well, for one, I refuse to believe that this is the Big Portage. Nothing to identify it."

"Not much," admitted Rob. "Not very much now. The falls that Roberts named the Black Eagle Falls are wiped out by the dam. The island is gone, the cottonwood is gone, the eagle and his mate are gone. That's the uppermost fall of the five. It's inside the city limits, where we are now."

"She was just twenty-six feet five inches of a drop," said the exact John. "Clark measured them all, the whole five of them; with the spirit level. They call the little fellow, only six feet seven inches, the Colter Falls, after John Colter, one of the expedition—only Lewis and Clark didn't name it at all, for Colter hadn't become famous then as the discoverer of the Yellowstone.

"Lewis liked the big Rainbow Fall about the best of the lot—it was so clean cut, all the way across the river. He named that one, and it stuck. He named the Crooked Falls, too, and that stuck. It must have been natural for somebody to name the Great Falls, because the drop there is eighty-seven feet and three-

ON THE MISSOURI

fourths of an inch, as Clark made it with his little old hand level. But they didn't name the big fall, though they did the Crooked, which is only nineteen feet high."

"Lewis saw the rainbow below this fall," said Jesse. Of course, that's why he named it. We could go down the stair easily and see it, if we wanted to. If it's the same rainbow, and if it's still there, the only reason is they couldn't melt up the rainbow and sell it, somehow. I don't want to see it. I don't care about all the smelters. I want my old cottonwood tree and my island and my eagle!

"I wonder who killed the eagle!" he went on. "Probably he threw it in the river and let it float over the falls. Maybe some section hand stuck a feather of that eagle in his hat and called it macaroni! For me, I'm never going to shoot at an eagle again, not in all my life."

"Nor am I," nodded Rob, gravely.

"Neither shall I," John also agreed.

"Well, at least the rainbow is left," said Rob, at length, "and the Big Spring that Clark found is still doing business at the edge of the river below the smelter above the Colter Fall—cold as it was one hundred and sixteen years ago, and more than a hundred yards across.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Nature certainly does things on a big scale here. What a sight all this must have been to those explorers who were the first to see it!

"But, so far as that goes, talking of changes, I don't think the general look and feel of this portage has changed as much as lots of the flat country away down the river—Floyd's Bluff, or the Mandan villages, lots of places where the river cut in. Here the banks are hard and rocky. They can't have altered much. It was a hard enough scramble over the side ravines, when we were coming up from camp, wasn't it, even if we didn't have dugout canoes on cottonwood solid wheels and willow axles—breaking down all the time?"

"But, Rob, a month—a whole month!" said John. "That must have made them worry a good deal, because now it was the middle of summer, and they didn't know where they were going or how they would get across."

"They did worry, more than they had till then. Now, I think they must have had quite a lot of stuff along, all the time. They had whisky, for instance—they drank the last of it right here at the Great Falls, and Uncle Dick says that was the first time Montana went dry! They had a grindstone. And they

ON THE MISSOURI

had an iron boat—or the iron frame of a boat—brought it all the way from Harper's Ferry, in Virginia, where Lewis had it made.

"That boat was the only bad play they made. She was Lewis's pet. I don't know why they never set her up before, but, anyhow, they did, at the head of the falls here. She had iron rods for gunwales, and they spliced willows to stiffen her. She was thirty-six feet long, and four and one-half feet beam, a couple of feet deep, and would carry all their cargo, while a few men could carry her. You see, Lewis had the skin-boat coracle in mind before he left Washington.

"Well, Lewis wanted elk hides for his boat, and the elk were scarce; he had his men out everywhere after elk hides. He got twenty-eight hides, and took off the hair, and that wasn't enough; so he took four buffalo hides to piece her out. And then she wouldn't do! No. Failure; the first and only failure of a Lewis and Clark outdoor idea.

"Well, Lewis was fair enough, though it mortified him to lose days and days on his pet boat. They sewed the skins with edged awls, and that cut the holes rather big, so when the hides dried and shrunk, the threads didn't fill the holes any more. He had no tar to pay the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

seams with, or he'd have been all right. They tried tallow and ashes, but it wouldn't work. For a few minutes she sat high and light; then the filling soaked out. Poor Lewis!—he had to give it up. So they buried her, somewhere opposite the White Bear Islands, I suppose, where they had their camp."

"Yes, and then Clark had to go and hustle cottonwood for some more dugouts, and cottonwood was a long, long way off," contributed John. "Oh, they had their troubles. Hah! We complained, coming up Portage Creek, and over the heads of the draws, trying to find their old portage trail. What if we'd been in moccasins? What if we'd been packing a hundred pounds or dragging at a hide wagon rope? And what if the buffalo had cut up the ground in rainy times, so it dried in little pointed lumps like so many nails—how'd that go in moccasins? Well, they had to lie down and rest, it was so awfully hard on them. But they never a one flickered, leader or enlisted men, and they put her through!"

"It was a whole month?" queried Jesse.

"Yes," John informed him, referring to the *Journal* once again. "It was June 14th when Shields came back downstream from Lewis, and told Clark's boat party that they had found

ON THE MISSOURI

the falls, and it was July 15th when they got their new canoes done and started off up the river."

"And I'll bet they were fussed up about things," said Jesse. "Must have been scared."

"No, I don't think they were," said Rob. "Well, anyhow, in one month they had surveyed and staked out their portage trail around the big falls, had *cached* their heavy stores, had built new boats, had killed all the meat they could use, and had proceeded on. They now knew that they were almost to the western edge of the buffalo. On west, as I expect Sacágawea also told them, they might have to come to horse meat and salmon. That didn't stop our fellows. They proceeded on."

"Time they did!" said Jesse.

"Yes. They had been away from St. Louis just a year and two months, when they left the Falls, here. Let's have a look at the map."

They sat down, here on the bank of the great river, on the edge of the great modern town, in sight of many smelter smokes, and bent over the old maps that William Clark had made with such marvelous exactness more than a hundred years ago.

"She seems to go in long sweeps, the old Missouri," said John, pointing with his finger.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"First we went almost west, to Kansas City, Missouri. Then almost north, to Sioux City, Iowa. Then northwest to Pierre, South Dakota, and then north to Bismarck, North Dakota. Then she runs strong northwest to the Yellowstone, and then straight west to here. From here she takes one more big angle, and runs almost south to the Three Forks."

"Look it!" pointed Jesse. "She starts below Forty, at St. Louis, and goes north almost to Forty-nine, and then she drops down again to Forty-five at the Three Forks. And Lewis had observations on latitude and longitude right along. Wonder what he thought!"

"He did a great deal of thinking," said Rob. He had the conviction that so great a river must run deep into the Rockies—he insisted on that. Then he had the Indians at Mandan to give him some local maps. And he had Sac-ágawea, worth more than them all for local advice in a tight place where no one else had been ahead. It's wonderful, if you study it, to see how he made all those things work together, and how he used his brains and his reason all the way across. Even about his pet portable boat, he didn't sit down and cry. He did the next thing."

"And proceeded on!"

ON THE MISSOURI

"And proceeded on, yes."

"Well," concluded Jesse, even if my eagle and my island are gone, I suppose I'll have to admit that this place is the real portage. They saw the Rockies right along now. They threw those canoes into the high, too!"

"Tracking and poling, pretty soon now, and a fine daily average," nodded Rob. "And now I don't suppose that we need just feel that we've funk'd anything by not sticking to our boat all the time, and taking a pack train here; because Clark or Lewis, or both of them, and a good many of the men, walked a lot of the time from here, hunting and scouting and figuring on ahead."

"That's so!" said Jesse. "Where were their horses all the time?"

"None above the Mandans," said Rob; "maybe not that far. They started with two, and picked up one, and one died—that's the record up to the Sioux. But beyond the Mandans they hoofed it, or poled and paddled and pulled. They couldn't sail the canoes—they gave that up. And now both their perogues were left behind. So when they left the old eagle on his broken tree, and the savage white bears all along here, and the rattlesnakes and everything else that tried to stop them here,

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

they drew their belts in and threw her in the high—that's right, Jess."

"And speaking of the portage," he continued, "Uncle Dick told me to get a wagon and follow down as close as we could to our camp and get our stuff all up to a place above the White Bear Islands, and go into camp there until he came in with Billy Williams and the pack horses, from his ranch on the Gallatin, near the Forks. So that's a day's work, even with a flivver—which I think we'll use part way. Time we set out and proceeded on, fellows."

They turned away from the Great Falls of the ancient river, in part with a feeling of sadness. Jesse waved his hand toward the Black Eagle Falls.

"The only thing is ——" said he.

The others knew Jesse was wishing for the wild days back again.

CHAPTER XX

READY FOR THE RIVER HEAD

THE young explorers, used as they were to outdoor life, had no difficulty in getting their outfit up a long coulee to the level of the prairie, where a small car quickly carried them into and beyond the city to a point where another gradual descent led down to the point usually believed to be that where the "White Bear" camp of Lewis and Clark was pitched above the falls. Here the great river was wide and more quiet, as though making ready for its great plunges below. Not far from the railway tracks they put up their temporary camp, as the pack horses had not yet arrived.

"The reader will suppose one hundred years to have elapsed!" said Jesse, sarcastically. "All right; but I want something besides fried eggs and marmalade."

"Easy now, Jess," rejoined his older friend. "Leave that to Uncle Dick. He told me he was going to get us some sport within ten days from here—fishing, I mean—trout, and even grayling. Of course, at this season

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

there'd be nothing to shoot. Lewis and Clark killed all sorts of game at all sorts of seasons, but they had to do that to live. They had thirty-two people in their party, all working hard and eating plenty. They would eat a whole buffalo every day, or a couple of elk, so somebody had to be busy. It would have taken a lot of fried eggs and marmalade to put them up and over those rapids. But as you say, we've got to suppose a hundred years to have elapsed, so we don't kill a buffalo every day."

"I could eat half of one, any day!" said John. "I get awfully hungry, just from fighting the mosquitoes."

"I'll bet they were bad enough. The old *Journal* says more about mosquitoes than any other hardship. Even Gass in his journal tells how bad they were here at the Great Falls—I think they feared them more than they did the white bears or the rattlesnakes; and they had plenty of them all. In one day Lewis was chased into the river by a grizzly, charged by three buffalo bulls, and nearly bitten by a rattler!"

"Must have been a busy day!" said John.

"Well, I expect every day was busy for them. For instance, when they got to this camp for

ON THE MISSOURI

the upper headquarters, they had to build two more canoes, ten miles above here. That made eight in all for the thirty-two people, or four to a canoe. I don't think they ever carried that many with their cargo; and they had quite a lot of cargo, even then. They were eating pork on the Continental Divide—their last pork!”

“No,” said Jesse, “they never did all ride at once. First one captain went ahead on foot, then the other. You see, they got into mountain water pretty soon now. They used the tow line a great deal, or poled the boats rather than paddled. Comes to getting a heavily loaded boat up a heavy river, you’ve got to put on the power, I’m telling you.”

“Yes, sir,” nodded Rob. “They knew they had to travel now. About all they had to go on was the girl Sacágawea’s word that pretty soon they’d come to her people.

“So they set out from here on July 15th, the very day that we will, if we get off tomorrow; only it took them one year more to get here than it did us. And two men were in each canoe—not enough to drive her, they found. And Lewis and the girl walked on this side the river, and after a while Clark walked on the other side—all on foot, of course. He

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

had Fields and Potts and his servant York with him—all alone in the Indian country, of which not one of them knew a foot.

“And now,” went on Rob, “they were once more against that same old very risky proposition of a divided party, part in boats and part on shore. I tell you, and we ought to know it, from our own experiences up North, that that’s the easiest way to get into trouble that any wilderness travelers could think up. They simply had marvelous luck. For instance, after Clark left them above here, on July 18th, he never saw them oftener than once a day again until July 22d, and that was away up at the head of the big Cañon.

“To the Three Forks was two hundred and fifty-two and one-half miles, as Clark called it, though engineers now say it is only two hundred and ten miles. He walked clean around the big cañon of the Missouri at the Gate of the Mountains—below Helena, that is—and never saw it at all! Now if you say he walked the whole ten days from the head of the falls to the Forks, and say it was only two hundred and ten miles and not over two hundred and fifty, that’s over twenty miles a day, on foot, in the mountains, under pack and a heavy rifle, in moccasins, and over prickly-

ON THE MISSOURI

pear country that got their feet full of thorns. Clark pulled out seventeen spines, broken off in his feet, one day when he stopped.

"Now that takes good men to do that. Not many sportsmen of to-day could do it, I know that. And yet, after four days' absence spent in this wild country where they were the first white men, they met again at the head of the Cañon below the Forks, just as easy and as natural as if they had telephoned to each other every day! I call that exploring! I call those chaps great men!"

"Reader will suppose one hundred years to have elapsed," drawled Jesse, again. "I'd telephone Uncle Dick now, if I knew where he was."

"Leave him alone," said John. "I give him till to-morrow. It was only a week ago he got word through to Billy Williams, in the Three Forks Valley, to come on with his horses."

"Well," said Jesse, "if I'm not to have half a buffalo to-night, and if Cruzatte, the bow man, isn't here to play a jig for us, I'll see what I can do about some fried eggs and marmalade."

"And I'll like to get a leg over leather once more," said John. "I'm looking for horses

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

now, same as Lewis and Clark did along in here for a few weeks."

The young travelers did not have so long to wait as they had feared. That very night, as they sat about their fire on their bed rolls, talking of their many trips together, they heard in the darkness not far away the tremulous note of a screech owl, repeated again a moment later. Jesse stopped talking, turning his head. Rob laughed: "That's Uncle Dick now!" he said, in a low tone; and answered with an owl call just like the one they had heard. They heard a laugh in the dark, and from behind the tent stepped Uncle Dick.

"How!" said he.

"How!" said each of the boys gravely. Rob made the Indian sign of "sit down"—his fist struck down on the robe that was spread by the little fire.

Their companion sat down, not saying a word. Pretty soon he began to talk in "sign talk," the boys all watching closely.

"Me. Gone. Two sleeps. I come here, now, me. Sun comes up. We go. We. Cross water. Horse—four. Ah! Two——"

Uncle Dick broke out laughing. John shook his fingers, loosely, to say, "What's that?"

"That's what I don't know!" Uncle Dick

ON THE MISSOURI

said, laughing again. "I don't know what the sign is for 'mule.' It isn't elk, or deer, or wolf, or buffalo. Oh, of course, split fingers over another finger—that means 'Ride horse.' But that does not mean 'mule'! And if I put on ears, how'd you know I didn't mean 'deer with-big-ears,' or 'mule deer,' and not 'mule'? The Indians had mule deer, but they didn't have mules!"

"Yes, they did!" said Jesse. "The *Journal* says they bought one mule of the Shoshonis, away west of here!"

"Does it? I'd forgotten. Well, I'd like to know where those people got that mule out here, in 1805! I'd have been no more surprised to see a mastodon really walking around out here. Of course, you know that President Jefferson wrote Lewis not to be surprised if he did see the mastodon still living in this unknown country. You see, all of them knew about the mastodon bones found in the Big Lick, Kentucky. They didn't know a thing about this new world we'd just bought of Napoleon, mastodons, mules, and all.

"Well, anyhow, Billy Williams has his camp five or six miles from here, across, and he has four saddle broncs and two perfectly good mules for the packs—one plumb black and one

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

plumb white—both ex-army mules and I suppose fifty years or so old. I think old Sleepy, the white one, is the wisest animal I ever saw on four legs—I've been out with Sleepy before, and with Billy, too. Good outfit, boys—small, no frills, all we need and nothing we don't.

"I've left our outboard motors here in town with a friend. Most wish we hadn't brought them around. But we'll see how much time we have when we get done projecting around at the head of the river.

"I can promise you some knotty problems up in there. To me, what's ahead of us in the next two weeks was the most exciting part of the whole Lewis and Clark trip across."

"But, Uncle Dick, you promised us some sport—fishing, I mean—trout and grayling."

"Jesse," said his uncle, "yes, I did. And being a good Indian myself, I'm going to keep my word to the paleface. We'll take a week off with Billy's flivver, if Billy's mules connect with the flivver; and I'll promise you, even now, hard hit as every trout water is all through here, the finest trout fishing—and the only grayling fishing—there is left in all America. How does that strike you?"

"Good! Where's it going to be?" demanded Jesse.

ON THE MISSOURI

“Never you mind. That’s a secret just yet. Billy knows.”

“And we don’t have to suppose a hundred years have elapsed?”

“No! Now turn in, fellows, or Billy’ll think we’re lazy in the morning.”

CHAPTER XXI

THE PACK TRAIN

BEFORE sunup Rob had the camp fire going, while Jesse brought in water and wood and John bent over his cooking. Uncle Dick walked up the river to where he had landed his boat the evening previous, and dropped down closer to the camp. The day still was young when the tent was struck and everything packed aboard the boat, which presently landed them on the farther shore, ready for the next lap of their journey and the new transportation that was now in order.

They were met by their new companion, the young rancher, Billy Williams, who had struck his own camp and brought the animals down to meet them. They found him a quiet, pleasant-spoken young man of perhaps thirty, lean and hardy, dressed much like a farmer except that he wore a pair of well-worn, plain, calf-skin chaps to protect his legs in riding—something in which the boys could not imitate him, for they were cut down to their Scout uniforms; which, however, did very well.

ON THE MISSOURI

They shook hands all around, the young rancher quietly estimating his young charges, and they in turn making up their opinions regarding him, which, needless to say, were not unfavorable, for none quicker than they to know a good outdoor man when they saw him.

"So this is old Sleepy?" said Jesse, going up to the sleek big white mule that stood with drooping head, the stalk of a thistle hanging out of a corner of his mouth. "He's fat and strong, isn't he? What makes him look so sad? And aren't you afraid he'll run away? He hasn't even a halter on him."

"No, he won't run away," replied Billy. "You couldn't drive him away from the packs. He always comes up every morning to be packed, and he always stands around like he was going to die—but he isn't. Sleepy'll live another hundred years, anyhow."

"I never hobble or tie or picket Sleepy at night; he sticks close to old Fox. That's my horse, the red one. You'd think Fox was going to die, too, but he isn't. He used to be a cow horse; and a mean one, too, they say; but all at once he reformed and since then he's led a Christian life, same as Sleepy."

"About that thistle. Sleepy is very fond of

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

thistles—he'll stop the whole train to eat one. Usually he carries one hanging in his mouth, so's to eat it when he gets hungry. He's a wise one, that mule. I'll bet you, an hour before camp to-night you'll see him wake up and get frisky; all his tired look is just a bluff. And I'll bet you, too, you can't manage to ride ahead of Sleepy on the trail. He never will take the last place on the trail."

"Why, how's that?" said Jesse. "I should think he'd like to loaf behind, if he's so wise."

"No, Sleepy has got brains. He knows that if he gets a stone in his foot, or if his pack slips, a man is his best friend. So he just goes ahead where folks can see that he's comfortable. You can't ride ahead of him; he'll gallop on and won't let you pass him; so don't try.

"Nigger, that other mule, doesn't care—some one'll have to keep him moving. I usually carry a little rubber sling shot in my pocket, and when Nigger gets too lazy and begins to straggle off I turn around and peck him one with a pebble. Then you ought to see him get into his place and promise to be good!

"I've got quite a pack train, at home on the Gallatin, but your uncle said this was all I was to bring. Can we take all your stuff?"

ON THE MISSOURI

Uncle Dick smiled at that and showed him the four rolls, neat and compact. "The robes make most of the bulk," said he.

"Yes. Well, I hope they can keep warm in July," said Billy.

"But we like 'em," said Jesse. "It's more like the old times."

"Yes. Well, I hope you've got some mosquito bar. We've still got a few old-time mosquitoes in the valley; but in a week or two now they'll all be gone."

"Trust these boys to have what they need, and no more," said Uncle Dick. "Now fall to and get on the loads while I take back my borrowed skiff."

Billy looked at the boys dubiously. "Well, I'll make it the 'lone packer' hitch," said he.

"Oh, they'll help you," said Uncle Dick. "They can throw almost any diamond, from the 'government' hitch down to the 'squaw' hitch. You see, we've lived up North a good deal, and learned to pack anything—man, dog, or mule."

"So? Well, all right." He turned to Rob. "Better take off side," he said; "the mules are more used to me for near side. I never blind-fold them."

They began with Sleepy, and soon had two

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

packs in the sling ropes, a third on top, with all ready to lash. Rob asked no questions, but went on, taking slack and cinching at the word. Billy laughed.

"Tried you on the old U. S. hitch," said he. "None better. Set?"

"All set!"

"Cinch!" Rob put his foot against Sleepy's far side and drew hard. In a jiffy the ropes flew into the tight diamond and Billy tied off. "She's a good one!" intoned Rob. Billy laughed again.

"I guess you've been there before," said he.

"How about you boys—can you all ride? My saddle stock's all quiet, far as I know, but ——"

"I think we can get by," said Rob. "We're not fancy, but we can ride all day."

"Well, you try out the lengths of the stirrup leathers for yourselves, and I'll lace them for you. First let's get your loose stuff in the panniers on Nigger—I brought along one pair of kyacks, for it's easier to carry the cooking stuff and the loose grub that way than it is to make up packs in the mantas every day.

John, who was cook for that week, now began to open and rearrange his kitchen pack; and Rob was standing off side, ready to handle

ON THE MISSOURI

the lash rope, when all at once they heard a snort and the trampling of hoofs.

They turned, to see Jesse just manage to get his seat on one of the horses, which plunged away, his head down, bucking like a good fellow. For a moment or so Jesse hung on, but before anyone could mount and help him he was flung full length, and lay, his arms out, motionless. It all happened in a flash.

They ran to him. At once Rob dragged him up, sitting, in front of him, and dragged his shoulders back, pressing his own knee up and down the boy's spine. He saw that no bones were broken, and was using some revival methods he had learned on the football field.

"Ouch! Leggo!" said Jesse, after a little. "What's the matter?"

Rob let him up. He staggered around in a circle two or three times, dazed. "Gee!" said he, laughing at last. "Where'd I drop from?" Then they all laughed, very gladly, seeing he had only been stunned by the fall.

"All right, son?" asked Billy, coming to him anxiously. "I'm sorry! I didn't know ——"

"My fault, sir," said Jesse, stoutly. "I admit it. I ought to have known more than to mount any Western horse from the right side and not the left. My fault. But, you see, I

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

had the laces loose on the stirrup, so I just thought I'd climb up on the other side and try the length there."

"You're right—that's not safe," said Billy. "I never knew that cayuse to act bad before. Are you afraid of him now?"

"Naw!" said Jesse, scoffing. "Bring him over—only fasten that leg leather. I'll ride him."

"Better let me top him off first."

"No, sir! He's in my string and I'll ride him alone!"

Billy allowed him to try, since he saw that the horse was now over his fright, but he mounted his own horse first and rode alongside, after he had the stirrup fixed. To the surprise of all, the horse now was gentle as a lamb, and Jesse kicked him in the side to make him go.

"Horse is a funny thing," said Billy. "He ain't got any real brains, like a mule. He gets scared at anything he ain't used to, and he can't reason any. Now look at Sleepy!"

That animal did not even turn his head, but stood under his pack with eyes closed, taking no interest in their little matters.

They had all the saddles ready and the last rope cinched by the time Uncle Dick returned.



BEFORE ANYONE COULD HELP HIM HE WAS FLUNG FULL LENGTH,
AND LAY MOTIONLESS



ON THE MISSOURI

He rebuked Jesse for a "tenderfoot play" when they told him what had happened, much annoyed. "I'm responsible for you," said he, "and while I'm willing you each should take all fair chances like a man, I'll not have any needless risks. Learn to do things right, in the field, and then do them that way always. You know better than to mount a horse on the off side. That's an Indian trick, but you're not an Indian and this isn't an Indian horse."

Jesse was much crestfallen for being thrown and then scolded for it.

"Is he hurt any?" asked Uncle Dick of Rob, aside.

Rob shook his head. "I don't think so. Just knocked the wind out of him. He was lying with his eyes wide open. He's all right."

"On our way!" exclaimed Uncle Dick. They all swung into saddle now, Billy leading, old Sleepy next to Fox, the place he always claimed; then Uncle Dick, Jesse, John, and Rob, Nigger coming last, poking along behind, his ears lopping. In a few moments they all were shaken into place in the train, and all went on as usual, the gait being a walk, only once in a while an easy trot.

"We set out and proceeded on under a gentle breeze," quoted John.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Reader will suppose one hundred years to have elapsed," began Jesse, trying to be funny.

"Jess," said his uncle at that, "rather you'd not poke fun at the *Journal*, or at our trip. I want you to take it seriously and to feel it's worth while."

"I'm sorry, sir," said Jesse, presently, who was rather feeling disgraced that morning. "I won't, any more. I'm glad we've got horses."

"Now I want you to remember that when Captain Clark and his three men came in here, on foot, they found an old Indian road, marked plain by the lodge poles. They went up Little Prickly Pear Creek, over the ridge and down the Big Pear Creek.

"You see, Clark was hunting Indians. He wanted horses; because he could see, even if the Indian girl had not told him, that before long they must run their river to its head, and then, if they couldn't get horses, their expedition was over for keeps. They all were anxious now.

"Billy, all I have to say about the road is that we'll make long days; and we'll keep off the main motor roads all the way when we get toward Marysville and Helena, over east and south—no towns if we can help it. It's going to be hard to dodge them."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Pretty hard to help it, that's no lie," said Billy. "This country's all settled now. They been running a steamer up and down the Cañon above the Gate of the Mountains. You folks going to take that trip? Want to see the big dam at the head, at the old ferry?"

Uncle Dick turned in his saddle, to see what the boys would say. John made bold to answer.

"Well, I don't know how the other fellows feel," said he. "Of course, we know the Gate is a wonderful spot, where the two ranges pinch in; and the five miles above, they all say, is one of the greatest cañons in America—river deep, banks a thousand, fifteen hundred feet——"

"Sure fine!" nodded Billy, who had dropped back alongside.

"Yes, but you see, we've been in all sorts of cañons and things, pretty much, first. Now, way it seems to me is, anybody can go, if it's a steamboat trip. And if there's dams, she isn't so wild any more. We'd rather put in our time wilder, I believe."

The others thought so, too. "Besides, we're following Clark now," said Rob, "and he never saw the Gate at all, famous as it got to be after Lewis described it. Lewis went wild over it."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Let's sidestep everything and get up to the Forks," voted John. "I didn't know this river was so long. We've got to hustle."

"I've got another book," said Uncle Dick, slapping his coat pocket. "It covers the trail later on—1904. To-night in camp, I'll show you something that it says about this country in here at the head of the Missouri River.

"You maybe didn't know that Helena, on below us, used to be Last Chance Gulch, where they panned \$40,000,000 of gold—and had a Hangman's Tree until not so very long ago, where they used to hang desperadoes.

"And off to Clark's right, when he topped the Ordway Creek divide, was where Marysville is now. They only took \$20,000,000 out of one mine, over there! And so on. Wait till to-night, and I'll let you read something about the great gold mines and other mines in this book.¹ I told you the Missouri River leads you into the heart of the wildest and most romantic history of America, though much of it is slipping out of mind to-day."

And that night, indeed around their first pack train camp fire, with the light of a candle stuck in a little heap of sand on top a box, he did read to an audience who sat with start-

¹ *The Trail of Lewis and Clark*; Olin D. Wheeler, 1904.

ON THE MISSOURI

ing eyes, listening to the talks of gold which were new to them.

"Listen here, boys," he said, after they had traced out the course of the day and made the field notes which served them as their daily journals. "Here's what it says about the very country we're in right now:

"Gold was discovered in Montana in 1852 and the principal mining camps of the early days were, in the orders of discovery and succession, Grasshopper Gulch—Bannack—1862; Alder Gulch—Virginia City—1863; Last Chance Gulch—Helena—1864; Confederate Gulch—Diamond City—1865. Smaller placers were being worked on large numbers of streams, many of them very rich, but the four here named were those which achieved national renown from the vast wealth they produced and from various incidents connected with their rise and fall. In 1876 there were five hundred gold-bearing gulches in Montana. . . .

"The California gold wave reached its zenith in 1853. What more natural than that the army of miners, with the decadence of the California fields, should search out virgin ground? . . .

"When Captain Clark crossed the divide between Ordway's and Pryor's Creeks he had at his right hand the spurs of the Rockies about Marysville, where one mine was afterward to be located from which more than \$20,000,000 of gold was to be taken. As he proceeded across the prickly-pear plains toward the Missouri, he came in sight of the future Last Chance Gulch, whereon Helena, the capital of the state, is located, and from whose auriferous gravels the world was to be enriched to the amount of \$40,000,000 more.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"From the gravel bars along the Missouri and its tributaries gold dust and nuggets running into millions of dollars have been taken, and the total production from placer mining through Montana, including hydraulic mining, from 1862 to 1900 was, probably, not far from \$150,000,000, the total gold production from the state being reckoned at about \$250,000,000.

"On July 23d the narrative mentions a Creek '20 yards wide' which they called Whitehouse's Creek, after one of their men. This stream was either Confederate or Duck Creek. The two flow into the Missouri near together—the U. S. Land Office map combines them into one creek. If Confederate Creek—this was the stream above the mouth, in the heart of the Belt Mountains.

"This gulch is said to have been discovered by Confederate soldiers of Price's army, who, in 1861-62, after the battles of Lexington, Pea Ridge, etc., in Missouri, made their way to Montana *via* the Missouri River and Fort Benton. On their way to Last Chance Gulch they found 'color' near the mouth of this creek. Following up the stream, they found the pay dirt growing richer, and they established themselves in the gulch, naming it Confederate; and within a short time Diamond City, the town of the gulch, was the center of a population of 5,000 souls.

"Confederate Gulch was in many respects the most phenomenal of all the Montana gulches. The ground was so rich that as high as \$180 in gold was taken from one pan of dirt; and from a plat of ground four feet by ten feet, between drift timbers, \$1,100 worth of gold was extracted in twenty-four hours. At the junction of Montana Gulch—a side gulch—with Confederate, the ground was very rich, the output at that point being estimated at \$2,000,000.

"Montana Bar, which lies some distance up the gulch,

ON THE MISSOURI

and at considerable of an elevation above it, was found in the latter part of 1865 to be marvelously rich. There were about two acres in reality, that were here sluiced over, but the place is spoken of as 'the richest acre of gold-bearing ground ever discovered in the world.' I quote A. M. Williams, who has made a special study of these old gulches:

"The flumes on this bar, on cleaning up, were found to be burdened with gold by the hundredweight, and the enormous yield of \$180 to the pan in Confederate and Montana Gulches was forgotten in astonishment, and a wild delirium of joy at the wonderful yield of over a hundred thousand dollars to the pan of gravel taken from the bedrock of Montana bar.'

"From this bar seven panfuls of clean gold were taken out at one 'clean-up,' that weighed 700 pounds and were worth \$114,800. A million and a half dollars in gold was hauled by wagon from Diamond City to Fort Benton at one time for shipment to the East. This gulch is reputed to have produced \$10,000,000, from 1864 to 1868, and it is still being sluiced.

"Some very large gold nuggets were found in this region. Many were worth from \$100 to \$600 or \$700. Several were worth from \$1,500 to \$1,800; one, of pure gold, was worth \$2,100 and two or three exceeded \$3,000 in value."

The boys sat silent, hardly able to understand what they had heard. Billy Williams nodded his head gravely.

"It's all true," said he. "When I was a boy I heard my father tell of it. He was in on the Confederate Creek strike. He helped sluice five thousand dollars in one day, and they didn't

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

half work. He said it was just laying there plumb yellow. They thought it would last always; but it didn't.

"You see, I was born out here. My dad was rich in the 'sixties, then he went broke, like everybody. When he got old he married and settled. He took to ranching and hunting, and I've taken to ranching. Times are quieter now. They weren't always quiet, along this little old creek, believe me!"

"Gee!" said Jesse, rubbing his head, which had a bump on it, "I'd like to pan some gold!"

"I expect you could," said Billy. "Might get the color, even now, on the Jefferson bars, I don't know. Of course, they've learned how to work the low-grade dirt now—cyanide and dredges and all. It's a business now!"

"Yes, and when we get along a day or so farther, beyond the Forks, I'll locate a few more spots that got to be famous for reasons that Lewis and Clark never dreamed. From the head of the Cañon up the beaver swarmed; this was the best beaver water in America, and known as such. That was the wealth those boatmen understood. No wonder Lewis thought it would be a good place for a fort. And the traders did build a fur post at the Forks, in 1808. And the Blackfeet came. And

ON THE MISSOURI

they killed poor old Drewyer and a lot of others of the fur traders. Oh, this was the dark and bloody Blackfeet ground, all right."

"Tell us about it, Uncle Dick!" Jesse was eager.

"Wait, son. We are still on foot with Clark, you know, and we don't know where the boats are, and we haven't found any Shoshonis and we've not too much to eat. Wait a day or so. We've only done about twenty-five miles, and that's a big day for the packs—not a much faster rate than Clark was marching. He nearly wore out himself and his men, on that march. I fancy not even York, his cheerful colored man, came in that night as frisky as old Sleepy."

"That's right," said John. "It was just as Mr. Williams said—he freshened up and came in playing, kicked up his heels when his load was off, and bit me on the arm and kicked old Nigger. And there he is now, with another thistle saved up!"

CHAPTER XXII

AT THE THREE FORKS

SOMETHING of the feverish haste which had driven Capt. William Clark, when, weary and sore-footed, he and his little party has crowded on up along the great bend of the Missouri and into the vast southerly dip of the Continental Divide, now animated the members of the little pack train, which followed as nearly as they could tell the "old Indian road" which Clark had followed. They felt that they at least must equal his average daily distance of twenty-one miles.

Keeping back from the towns all they could, though often in sight or hearing of the railway, they passed above the Gate of the Mountains and the Bear Tooth Rock, and skirted the flanks of the Belt range, which forked out on each side of the lower end of that great valley in which Nature for so long had concealed her secrets of the great and mysterious river.

A feeling almost of awe came over them all as they endeavored to check up their own

ON THE MISSOURI

advance with the records of these others who had been the first white men to enter that marvelous land which ought to be called the Heart of America, hidden as it is, having countless arteries and veins, and pulsing as it is even now with mysterious and unfailing power—the most fascinating spot in all America.

“Here they passed!” Uncle Dick would say. “Sometimes Clark met them, or hung up a deer on the bank for them. Always in the boats, or on shore when she was walking, the Indian girl would say that soon they would come to the Three Rivers, where years ago she had been captured by the Minnetarees, from the far-off Mandan country. ‘Bimeby, my people!’ I suppose she said. But for weeks they did not find her people.”

“Was Clark on his ‘Indian road’ all the time?” asked Rob.

“He must have been a good deal of the time, or rather on two branches of it. That’s natural. You see, this was on the road to the Great Falls, and the Shoshonis, Flatheads, and Nez Percés all went over there each summer to get meat. The Flatheads and Nez Percés took the cut-off from east of Missoula, direct to the Falls—the same way that Lewis went

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

when they went east. They came from the salmon country west of the Rockies. So did the Shoshonis, part of the time, but their usual trail to the buffalo was along the Missouri and this big bend. Their real home was around the heads of the river, where they had been driven back in.

"But they were bow-and-arrow people, while the Blackfeet had guns that they got of the traders, far north and east. Two ways the Blackfeet could get horses—over the Kootenai Trail, where Glacier Park is, or down in here, where the Shoshonis lived; for the Shoshonis also had horses—they got them west of the Rockies. So this road was partly war road and partly hunting road. I don't doubt it was rather plain at that time.

"When the first fur traders of the Rocky Mountain Company came in here, right after Lewis and Clark came back and told their beaver stories, the country was known, you might say. It was at the Three Forks that Colter and Potts, two of the Lewis and Clark men, were attacked by the Blackfeet, and Potts killed and Colter forced to run naked, six miles over the stones and cactus—till at last he killed his nearest pursuer with his own

ON THE MISSOURI

spear, and hid under a raft of driftwood in the Jefferson River.

"And when the fur men came up and built their fort, they had the Lewis and Clark hunter Drewyer to guide them at first. But the Blackfeet made bitter war on them. They killed Drewyer, as I told you, not far ahead of us now, at the Forks. And they drove out Andrew Henry, the post trader. He just naturally quit and fled south, over into the Henry's Lake country, in Idaho, and kept on down the Snake there, till he built his famous fort in there, so long known as Fort Henry. Well, he came in this way; and on ahead is where he started south, on a keen lope.

"Can we get across, south from here, into Henry's Lake, Billy?" he asked.

"Easy as anything," said Billy, "only the best way is to go by car from my place. Lots of folks go every day, from Butte, Helena, all these towns all along the valleys. Perfectly good road, and that's faster than a pack train."

"That's what I have been promising my party!" said Uncle Dick. "But they shall not go fishing until they have got a complete notion of how all this country lies and how Lewis and Clark got through it."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"They hardly ever were together any more, in here," said Rob. "First one, then the other would scout out ahead. And they both were sick. Clark was laid up after he met the boat party at the Forks, and Lewis took his turn on ahead. What good sports they were!"

"Yes," said John, "and what good sports the men were! They'd had to track and pole up here, all the way from the Falls, and at night they were worn out. Grub was getting scarce and they hadn't always enough to keep strong on. And above the Forks they had to wade waist deep in ice water, for hours, slipping on the stones, in their moccasins, and their teeth chattering. I'll bet they hated the sight of a beaver, for it was the beaver dams that kept all the shores full of willows and bayous, so they couldn't walk and track the boat, but had to take to the stream bed. Why, the beaver were so bad that Lewis got lost in the dams and had to lie out, one night! And he didn't know where his boats were, either."

"Well, that's what brought in the first wave of whites," said Uncle Dick—"the beaver. Then after they had got the beaver about all trapped out, say fifty years, in came the placer mines. Then came the deep lode mines—silver

ON THE MISSOURI

and copper. And then the farmers. Eh, Billy?"

"Sure," said Billy. "And then the tourists! Lots of folks that run dude ranches make more than they could raising hay. The Gallatin Valley, above me, is settled solid. It's the finest black-land farm country in all the Rockies, and pretty as a picture. So's the Beaverhead Valley, and all these others, pretty, too. Irrigation now, instead of sluices; and lots of the dry farmers from below go up to Butte and work in the mines in the wintertime—eight or ten thousand men in mines there all the time."

"And all because we'd bought this country from Napoleon!" said John.

"I'm reading about that," said Billy. "I've got lots of books and maps, and, living right in here, I've spent a lot of time studying out where Lewis and Clark went. I tell it to you, they just naturally hot-footed it plumb all through here, one week after another. They did more travel, not knowing a thing about one foot of this country, and got over more of it, and knew more about it every day, than any party of men since then have done in five times the time they took."

"And didn't know where they were, or what

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

would be next," assented John. "Those chaps were the real, really real thing!"

In this way, passing through or near one town after another, traveling, talking, hurrying, too busy in camp to loaf an hour, our young explorers under their active leaders exceeded the daily average of William Clark to the point where, above the present power dam, the valley of the Missouri opens out above the Cañon into that marvelous landscape which not even a century of occupancy has changed much, and which lay before them, wildly but pleasingly beautiful, now as it had for the first adventurers.

"And it's ours!" said Rob, jealously. He took off his hat as he stood gazing down over the splendid landscape from the eminence which at that time they had surmounted.

"Down near the power dam, somewhere," said Billy, "is where Clark must have struck into the river again from the trail he'd followed. He was about all in, and his feet in bad shape, but he would not give up. Then he lit on out ahead again, and was first at the Forks."

"Why, you've read the *Journal*, too!" said John, and Billy nodded, pleasantly.

"Why, yes, I think every man who lives in Montana ought to know it by heart. Yes, or

ON THE MISSOURI

in America. I'd rather puzzle it all out, up in here, than read anything else that we get in by mail.

"My dad was all over here in early days. Many a tale he told of the placers and the road agents—yes, and of the Vigilantes, too, that cleaned out the road agents and made it safe in here, to travel or live."

"Was your father a Vigilante, sir?" asked Jesse.

"Well now, son," grinned Billy, "since you ask me, I more'n half believe he was! But you couldn't get any of those old-time law-and-order men to *admit* they'd ever been Vigilantes. They kept it mighty secret. Of course, when the courts got in, they disbanded. But they'd busted up the old Henry Plummer's gang and hung about twenty of the road agents, by that time. They was some active—both sides."

At last the party, after a week of steady horse work, pitched their little camp about mid-afternoon at the crest of a little promontory from which they commanded a marvelous view of the great valley of the Three Forks. On either hand lay a beautiful river, the Gallatin at their feet, a little town not far, the Jefferson but a little way.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I know where this is!" exclaimed John. "I know ——"

"Not a word, John!" commanded Uncle Dick. "Enjoy yourselves now, in looking at this valley. After we've taken care of the horses and made camp, I'll see how much you know."

CHAPTER XXIII

SUNSET ON THE OLD RANGE

THEY completed their camp on the high point which they had reached. Billy brought in Nigger's panniers full of wood for the cooking fire, and they had water in the desert bag which always was part of their camp equipment, so they needed not seek a more convenient spot; nor would they have exchanged this for any other.

"We've seen many a view, fellows," said John, as the three stood near the edge of the little promontory almost in the village, "but of them all, in any country, all up this river, and all the way north to Kadiak Island, or to the Arctic Circle—nothing that touches this."

They had hurriedly finished their evening meal. Their robes were spread on the ground, their guns and rod cases lay at the saddles or against the panniers. Their maps, journals, and books lay on the robes before them. But they all turned to take in the beauties of the summer sunset now unfolding its vast screen of vivid coloring in the West. Thence they

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

looked, first up one valley and then another, not so much changed, in spite of the occasional fields.

"Of course," said John, after a time, "we know this spot, and know why you and Mr. Billy brought us here. It's the Fort Rock of Meriwether Lewis—it couldn't be anything else!"

Uncle Dick smiled and nodded.

"That's what she is," nodded Billy. "Right here's where Cap'n Lewis stood and where he said was a good place for a fort—so high, you see, so no Indians could jump them easy. But they never did build the first fur fort here; that was higher up, on the Jefferson, little ways.

"Up yonder's the Gallatin—we're up her valley a little way. My ranch is up in ten miles. Yonder used to be quite a little town like, right down below us. Yon's the railroad, heading for the divide, where we came over from Prickly Pear. Other way, upstream, is the railroad to Butte. Yon way lies the Madison; she heads off southeast, for Yellowstone Park. And yon's the main Jefferson; and the Madison joins her just a little way up. And you've seen the Gallatin come in—the swiftest of the three.

"Now what would you do, if you was

ON THE MISSOURI

Lewis?" he added. "And which way would you head if you wanted to find the head of the true Missouri and get on across the Rockies?"

"You see, we're in a big pocket of the Rockies here—the great Continental Divide sweeps away down south in a big curve here—made just so these three rivers and their hundred creeks could fan out in here. She's plumb handsome even now, and she was plumb wild then. What would you do? Which river would you take?"

"I'd scout her out," said John.

"They did. You look in your book and you'll find that, while Lewis was in here Clark was nigh about forty miles above here; he plumb wore his men out, twenty-five miles the first day above the Forks, twelve miles the next. That was up the Jefferson, you see; they picked it for the real Missouri, you see, because it was fuller and quieter.

"They didn't waste any time, either of them, on the Gallatin. That left the Madison. So Clark comes back down the Jefferson and they forded her, away above the Forks—no horses, on foot, you see—and near drowned that trifling fellow Chaboneau, the Indian girl's husband.

"Then Clark—he wasn't never afraid of

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

getting lost or getting drowned, and he never did get lost once—he strikes off across the ridges, southeast, heading straight for the Madison, just him and his men, and I'll bet they was good and tired by now, for they'd walked all the way from Great Falls, hunting Indians, and hadn't found one yet, only plenty tracks.

"So he finds the Madison all right, and comes down her to the Forks. And there—July 27th, wasn't it, the *Journal* says?—he finds Lewis and all eight of the canoes and all of the folks, in camp a mile above the Forks, just as easy and as natural as if they hadn't ever known anything except just this country here. Of course, they had met almost every day, but not for two days now.

"By that time they had their camp exactly on the spot where that Indian girl had been captured by the Minnetarees six or eight years earlier. She'd had a long walk, both ways! But she was glad to get back home! Nary Indian, though now it was getting time for all the Divide Indians to head down the river, over the two trails, to the Falls, where the buffalo were."

"That's a story, Billy!" said Jesse. Billy stopped, abashed, forgetting how enthusiasm had carried him on.

ON THE MISSOURI

"Go ahead," said Uncle Dick.

"Well, you see, I read all about it all, and I get all het up, even now," said Billy; "me raised right in here, and all."

"No apologies, Billy. Go on."

"Well then, by now Clark, he was right nigh all in. His feet was full of thorns and he had a boil on his ankle, and he'd got a fever from drinking cold water when he was hot—or that's how he figured it. Nothing had stopped him till now. But now he comes in and throws down on a robe, and he says, 'Partner, I'm all in. I haven't found a Indian. But I allow that's the branch to follow.'

"He points up the Jefferson. Maybe the Indian girl said so, too, but I think they'd have taken the Jefferson, anyhow. They all agreed on that.

"Now I've heard that the Indian girl kept pointing south and saying that over that divide—that would be over the Raynolds Pass—was water that led to the ocean. I don't know where they get that. Some say the Indian girl went up the Madison with Clark. She didn't; she was with Lewis at the boats all the time. Some say that Clark got as far south as the cañon of the Madison, northwest of the Yellowstone Park. He didn't and couldn't. Even if he did

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

and was alone, that wouldn't have led him over Raynolds Pass. That's a hundred miles, pretty near.

"I wonder what would have happened to them people, now, if they all had picked the wrong branch and gone up the Madison? If they'd got on Henry's Lake, which is the head of one arm of the Snake, and had got started on the Snake waters—good night! We'd never have heard of them again.

"But I don't think the Indian girl knew anything much about the Snake, though her people hunted all these branches. Her range was on the Jefferson. She was young, too. Anyhow, that's what they called the Missouri, till she began to peter out. That was where they named this place where we are now. They concluded, since all the three rivers run so near even, and split so wide, they'd call them after three great men, Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin. But that wasn't till two weeks after they'd left the Forks. Most folks thought they'd sprung the names as soon as they seen the Forks, but they didn't.

"Lots of people right in here, too, even now, they think that Lewis and Clark wintered right here at the Forks or on up near Dillon. I've heard them argue that and get hot over it.

ON THE MISSOURI

Some said they wintered on an island, near Dillon. Of course, they allow that Lewis and Clark got across, but they say they was gone three years, not two. That's about as much as the old *Journal* is known to-day!

"Me living in here, I know all the creeks from here to the Sawtooth and Bitter Roots, and my dad knew them, and I'll tell you it's a fright, even now, to follow out exactly where all they went, or just how they got over. The names on most of their creeks are changed now, so you can't hardly tell them. About the best book to follow her through on is that railroad man, Wheeler. He took a pack train, most ways, and stayed with it.

"People get all mixed up on the old stuff, because we travel by rail now, so much. For instance, Beaverhead Rock—and that's been a landmark ever since Lewis and Clark come through—is disputed even now. You can start a fight down at Dillon any time by saying that their Beaverhead Rock is really Rattlesnake Rock—though I'll have to own it looks a lot more like a beaver than the real rock does. That real one now is mostly called the Point of Rocks.

"That's the way it goes, you see—everything gets all mixed up. The miners named a lot

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

of the old Lewis and Clark streams all over again. Boulder Creek once was Frazier's Creek; Philosophy Creek they changed to Willow Creek, just to be original. The Blacktail, away up in, was first named after McNeal, and the North Boulder, this side of there, was first called after Fields. The Pipestone used to be the Panther. You know the Big Hole River, of course, where Butte gets the city water piped from—used to be fine fishing till they spoiled it by fishing it to death—well, that was called Wisdom River by Lewis. And I think if he'd been right wise, he'd have left his boats at the mouth and started right up there, on foot, and not up the Jefferson. She was shallow, but if he'd only known it, she'd have led him to the Divide easier than the way they went, and saved a lot of time. But, of course, they didn't know that."

"Go on, Billy, go on!" said Rob, eagerly. "You're the first man I ever knew who'd actually been over this ground in here. All we've done has been to read about it; and that's different. A country on a map is one thing, but a country lying out of doors on the ground is different."

"I'll agree to that," said Billy. "If you ever once figure out a country by yourself, you

ON THE MISSOURI

never get lost in it again. You can easy get lost with a map and a compass.

“Well now, the miners changed more names, too. It was on Willard’s Creek, named after one of the Lewis and Clark men, that they found the gold at Bannack camp. They called that Grasshopper Creek and left poor Willard out. And then they called the Philanthropy River, which comes in from the south, opposite to the Wisdom—Lewis called them that because Thomas Jefferson was so wise and so philanthropic, you know—well, they changed that to the Stinking Water!

“Yet ‘Philanthropy’ would have been a good name for that. On one of the side creeks to it they found Alder Gulch in 1863; and Alder Gulch put Montana on the map and started the bull outfits moving out from Benton, at the head of navigation. That’s where Virginia City is now. Nice little town, but not wild like she was.

“Now, the old trail—where the road agents used to waylay the travelers—led from Bannack to the Rattlesnake, down the Rattlesnake to the Jefferson, down the Jefferson to the Beaverhead Rock, then across the Jefferson and over the Divide to Philanthropy. And that was one sweet country to live in, in those

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

days, my dad said! The road agents had a fine organization, and they knew every man going out with dust. So they'd lay in wait and kill him. They killed over a hundred men, that way, till the Vigilantes broke in on them. The best men in early Montana were among the Vigilantes—all the law-and-order men were. But right from where we're standing now, on the Lewis Rock, you're looking over one of the wildest parts of this country, or any other country. You ought to read Langford's book, *Vigilante Days and Ways*. I've got that in my library, up at my ranch, too."

"You know your part of this country mighty well, Billy," said Uncle Dick, after a time. "I've known you did, for a long time."

"I love it, that's all!" said the young ranchman.

"Now what shall we do, sir?" he added, after a time; "go on up to my ranch, or go on to the mouth of the Columbia River, or go to the true head of the Missouri River, or go back to Great Falls—or what?"

"What do you want to do, Billy?"

"Anything suits me. Barring the towns, I can go anywhere on earth with Sleepy and Nigger, and almost anywhere on earth with my flivver. I wouldn't stay here for a camp, be-

ON THE MISSOURI

cause it's not convenient. The mosquitoes are about done now, and the camping's fine all over. Fishing's good, too, right now; and I know where they are."

"I'll tell you," said Uncle Dick; "we'll move up one more march or so, to the Beaverhead Rock. We'll camp there, and make a little more medicine before we decide.

"I came here"—he turned to the others—"to have you see the sunset, here on the old range. Are you satisfied with the trip thus far?"

"We'd not have missed it for the world," said Rob, at once. "It's the best we've ever had. In our own country—and finding out for ourselves how they found our country for us! That's what I call fine!"

"Roll up the plunder for to-night," said Uncle Dick. "The sunset's over."

CHAPTER XXIV

NEARING THE SOURCE

“WELL, Jesse, how’d you sleep last night?” inquired Billy in the morning, as he pushed the coffee pot back from the edge of the little fire and turned to Jesse when he emerged from his blankets.

“Not too well,” answered Jesse, rubbing his eyes. “Fact is, it’s too noisy in this country. Up North where we used to live, it was quiet, unless the dogs howled; but in here there’s towns and railroads all over—more than a dozen towns we passed, coming up from the Great Falls, and if you don’t hear the railroad whistles all night, you think you do. Down right below us, you can throw a rock into the town, almost, and up at the Forks there’ll be another squatting down waiting for you. All right for gasoline, Billy, but we’re supposed to be using the tracking line and setting pole.”

“Sure we are—until we meet the Shoshonis and get some horses.”

“Well, I don’t want to camp by a railroad or a wire fence any more.”

ON THE MISSOURI

"No? Well, we'll see what we can do. Anyhow, one thing you ought to be glad about."

"What's that?"

"Why, that you don't have to walk down into that ice water and pole a boat or drag it for two or three hours before breakfast. Yet that's what those poor men had to do. And three times they mention, between the Forks and the mountains, the whole party had to wait breakfast till somebody killed some meat. Anyhow, we've got some eggs and marmalade."

"Well, they got meat," demurred Jesse, seating himself as he laced his shoes.

"Thanks to Drewyer, they usually did. He got five deer, one day, and about every time he went out he hung up something. I think he'd got to the front in the party now, next to Lewis and Clark. Chaboneau they don't speak well of.

"Shields was a good man, and the two Fields boys. But, though Clark was mighty sick, and Lewis got down, too, for a day or so, in here, they were about the best men left. The others were wearing out by now.

"You see"—here Billy flipped a cake over in the pan—"they couldn't have had much wool clothing left by now—they were in buckskin, and buckskin is about as good as brown paper

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

when it's wet. They had no hobnails, and their broken, wet moccasins slipped all over those slick round stones. You ever wade a trout stream, you boys?"

"I should say so!"

"Well, then you know how it is. While the water is below your knees you can stand it quite a while. When it gets along your thighs you begin to get cold. When it's waist deep, you chill mighty soon and can't stand it long—though Lewis stripped and dived in eight feet of water to get an otter he had shot. And slipping on wet rocks ——"

"Don't we know about that! We waded up the Rat River, on the Arctic Circle."

"You did! You've traveled like that? Well, then you can tell what the men were standing here. They hadn't half clothes, a lot of them were sick with boils and 'tumers,' as Clark calls them. Some were nearly crippled. But in this water, ice water, waist deep, they had to get eight boats up that big creek yonder—beaver meadows all along, so they couldn't track. Sockets broke off their setting poles, so Captain Lewis, he ties on some fish gigs he'd brought along. One way or another, they got on up.

"They now began to get short rations, too."

ON THE MISSOURI

At first they couldn't get any trout, or the whitefish—those fish with the 'long mouths' that Lewis tells about. I'll bet they never tried grasshoppers. But along above here they began to get fish, as the game got scarcer. Lewis tells of setting their net for them."

"You certainly have been reading that little old *Journal*, Billy!"

"Why shouldn't I? It's one great book, son. More I read it, the more I see how practical those men were. Now, those men were all fine rifle shots, and they'd go against anything, though along here there wasn't many grizzlies, and all of them shy, not bold like the buffalo grizzlies at the Falls. But they didn't hunt for sport—it was meat they wanted. Once in a while a snag of venison; antelope hard to get; no buffalo now, and very few elk; by now, even ducks and geese began to look good, and trout.

"The ducks and geese and cranes were all through here—breeding grounds all along. That was molting time and they caught them in their hands. They killed beaver with the setting poles, and one day the men killed several otter with their tomahawks, though I doubt if they could eat otter. You see, as Clark's notes say, the beaver were here in thousands. I suppose when so big a party went splashing up

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the creek the beaver and otter would get scared and swim out to the main stream, and there some one would hit them over the head as they swam by."

"One thing," said Jesse, "I don't think they flogged any of the men any more. I don't remember any since they left the Mandans."

"Maybe they didn't need it, and maybe their leaders had learned more. Ever since Lewis picked the right river at the Marias forks, I reckon the men relied on him more. Then, he'd be poking around shooting at the sun and stars with his astronomy machines, and that sort of made them respect him. Clark was a good sport. Lewis, I reckon, was harder to get along with. But they both must have been pretty white with the men. They tell of the hardships of the men, and how game and patient they are—not a whimper about quitting."

"I know," said Jesse, hauling out his worn copy of the *Journal* from his bed roll and turning the leaves; "they speak of the way the men felt:

"We Set out early (Wind N.E.) proceeded on passed Several large Islands and three Small ones, the river much more Sholey than below which obliges us to haul the Canoes over those Sholes which Suckceed each other at Short intervalles emencely laborious; men much

ON THE MISSOURI

fatigued and weakened by being continually in the water drawing the Canoes over the Sholes, encamped on the Lard Side men complain verry much of the emence labour they are obliged to undergo & wish much to leave the river. I passify them. the weather Cool, and nothing to eate but venison, the hunters killed three Deer to day.

“Anxious times about now, eh? But still, I don’t think the leaders ever once lost their nerve. Here’s what Lewis wrote about it:

“We begin to feel considerable anxiety with respect to the Snake Indians. if we do not find them or some other nation who have horses I fear the successful issue of our voyage will be very doubtfull or at all events much more difficult in it’s accomplishment. we are now several hundred miles within the bosom of this wild and mountanous country, where game may rationally be expected shortly to become scarce and subsistence precarious without any information with respect to the country not knowing how far these mountains continue, or wher to direct our course to pass them to advantage or intersept a navigable branch of the Columbia, or even were we on such an one the probability is that we should not find any timber within these mountains large enough for canoes if we judge from the portion of them through which we have passed. however I still hope for the best, and intend taking a tramp myself in a few days to find these yellow gentlemen if possible. my two principal consolations are that from our present position it is impossible that the S.W. fork can head with the waters of any other river but the Columbia, and that if any Indians can subsist in the form of a nation in these mountains with the means they have of acquiring food we can also subsist.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"No wonder the men wanted horses now—they knew the river's end was near. And yet they were four hundred miles, right here, from the head of the Missouri!" Billy had his *Journal* pretty well in mind, so he went on frying bacon.

"Why, what you talking about, Billy? They made the Forks by July 27th, and by the end of August they were over the Divide, headed for the Columbia!"

"Sure. And at the Two Forks, where the Red Rock River turns south, the other creek—Horse Prairie Creek that they took—only ran thirty miles in all. The south branch was the real Missouri, but they kept to the one that went west. That was good exploring, and good luck, both. It took them over, at last."

"But, Billy, everybody knows that Lewis and Clark went to the head of the Missouri."

"Then everybody knows wrong! They didn't. If they had they'd never have got over that year, nor maybe ever in any year. I tell you they had luck—luck and judgment and the Indian girl. Sacágawea kept telling them this was her country; that her people were that way—west; that they'd get horses. For that matter, there were strong Indian trails, regular roads, coming in from the south, north and

ON THE MISSOURI

west; but it wasn't quite late enough for the Indians to be that far east on the fall buffalo hunt at the Great Falls. It took them more than a month to figure out the trail from here to the top. But if they had started south, down the Red Rock ——"

"Tell me about that, Billy."

"We're working too hard before breakfast, son! Go get the others up while I fry these eggs. If we don't get off the Fort Rock and on our way, somebody'll think we're crazy, camping up here."

Soon they were all sitting at breakfast around the remnants of the little fire, and after that Billy went after the horses while the others got the packs ready.

Jesse was excitedly going over with Rob and John some of the things which Billy had been saying to him. Uncle Dick only smiled.

"First class in engineering and geography, stand up!" said he, as he seated himself on his lashed bed roll. The three boys with pretended gravity stood and saluted.

"Now put down a few figures in your heads, or at least your notebooks. How high up are we here?"

"Do you mean altitude, or distance, sir?" asked Rob.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I mean both. Well, I'll tell you. Our altitude here is four thousand and forty-five feet. That's twenty-five hundred and twenty feet higher than the true head of the Mississippi River—and we're not to the head of the Missouri by a long shot, even now.

"And how far have we come, say to the Three Forks, just above here?"

"That's easy," answered John, looking at his book. "It's twenty-five hundred and forty-seven miles, according to the last river measurements; but Lewis and Clark call it twenty-eight hundred and forty-eight miles."

"That's really of no importance," said Uncle Dick. "The term 'mile' means nothing in travel such as theirs. The real unit was the day's work of 'hearty, healthy, and robust young men.' One set of figures is good as the other.

"Still, it may be interesting to see how much swifter the Missouri River is than the Father of Waters. From the Gulf of Mexico to the source of the Mississippi is twenty-five hundred and fifty-three miles. Up our river, to where we stand, is just six miles short of that, yet the drop is more than twenty-five hundred feet more. One drops eight and a quarter inches to the mile, and the other nineteen inches to the mile.

ON THE MISSOURI

“But understand, we’re talking now of the upper thread of the Mississippi River, and of the Three Forks of our river—which isn’t by any means at its head, even measuring to the head of the shortest of the three big rivers that meet here. Now, add three hundred and ninety-eight miles to twenty-five hundred and forty-seven miles. See what you got?”

“That’s twenty-nine hundred and forty-five miles!” exclaimed John. “Is it that far from the head to St. Louis?”

“Yes, it is. And if you took the Lewis and Clark measurements to the Forks it would be thirty-two hundred and forty-seven miles.

“And if we took their distances to the place where they left their canoes—that’s what they called Shoshoni Cove, where the river petered out for boats—we’d have three thousand and ninety-six miles; two hundred and forty-seven miles above here, as they figured it, and they weren’t at the summit even then. Now if we’d take their probable estimate, if they’d finished the distance to the real head of the Missouri, we’d have to allow them about thirty-two hundred and forty-nine miles plus their overrun, at least fifty miles.

“Yes, if they’d have gone to the real source, they’d have sworn it was over thirty-three

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

hundred miles to St. Louis, and over forty-five hundred miles to the Gulf. The modern measurements make it forty-two hundred and twenty-one miles.

“So, young gentlemen, you can see that you are now coming toward the head of the largest continuous waterway in the world. It is five hundred miles longer than the Amazon in South America, and more than twelve hundred miles longer than the river Nile, in Africa.

“Now, Meriwether Lewis did not know as much about all these things as we do now, yet see how he felt about it, at his camp fire, not so far from here:

“The mountains do not appear very high in any direction tho’ the tops of some of them are partially covered with snow. this convinces me that we have ascended to a great hight since we have entered the rocky Mountains, yet the ascent has been so gradual along the vallies that it was scarcely perceptable by land. I do not believe that the world can furnish an example of a river runing to the extent which the Missouri and Jefferson’s rivers do through such a mountainous country and at the same time so navigable as they are. if the Columbia furnishes us such another example, a communication across the continent by water will be practicable and safe.

“Class dismissed. I see Billy has got the horses.” The boys put away their maps and rolled their beds.

ON THE MISSOURI

All of the party being good packers, it was not long before they had left their camp ground on the knoll and were off upstream once more, edging the willow flats and swinging to the ford of the Madison, which they made with no great danger at that stage of the water. Thence they headed back for the Jefferson fork, having by now got a good look at the great valleys of the Three Forks.

"Which way, sir?" asked Billy now of their leader. "Shall we stop at the real headquarters camp of the Three Forks, just about a mile up—where the Indian girl told them she had been taken prisoner when she was a child?"

"Too near town!" sung out Jesse, who overheard the question. "Let's shake the railroad."

"She's right hard to shake, up in here," rejoined Billy. "Off to the right is the N.P., heading for Butte, up the Pipestone. We couldn't shake the left-hand branch of her this side of Twin Bridges, and that's above the Beaverhead Rock. From there upstream to Dillon, along the Beaverhead River, there isn't any railroad. We can swing wide, except where she cañons up on us, and may be get away from the whistles. Only, if we go as far as Dillon, we hit the O.S.L. She runs south, down the Red Rock, which is the real Mis-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

souri River. And she runs up the Big Hole, which the *Journal* calls the Wisdom River. And there's a railroad up Philosophy Creek, too ——"

"And up all the cardinal virtues!" exclaimed Uncle Dick. "I don't blame the boys for getting peeved. Now, we don't care for cañon scenery so much, nor for willow flats with no beaver in them. I would like the boys to see the Beaverhead Rock and get a general notion of how many of these confusing little creeks there were that had to be worked out.

"I'd like them, too, to get a general idea of the old gold fields. We're right in the heart of those tremendous placers that Lewis and Clark never dreamed about. I'd like them to know, on the ground, not on the map, how the old road agents' trail ran, between Bannack and Virginia City. I'd like them to get a true idea of how Lewis and Clark worked out their way, over the Divide. Lastly, I'd like them to see where the true Missouri heads south and leaves the real Lewis and Clark trail.

"Now, what's the best point to head for, Billy, for a sort of central camp? I don't think we can do more than go to the summit, this trip. What do you say?"

"Well, sir, I'd say the Shoshoni Cove, where

ON THE MISSOURI

they left their canoes and took horses, would be about the most central point for that. That'll bring us to the last forks—what they call the Two Forks."

"But how about the Beaverhead Rock?"

"We ought to see that," said Rob, at the time. "That's as famous as a landmark as almost anything on the whole river."

"We can get in there easy enough and get out," said Billy. "It's just a question of time on the trail. Taking it easy, give us a week, ten days, on the way to the Cove, taking in the Rock for one camp. It's not half as far by land as it is by water."

"What do you say, boys? Shall we travel by rail or pack train now?"

With one shout they all voted for the pack train. "We couldn't get along without Billy now, anyhow," said Jesse, "because he knows the *Journal* as well as we do, and he knows the country better."

"Thank you, son. Well, I guess old Sleepy won't die before we get there, though he pretends he can hardly go. Say we get back into the side creeks a little and pick up a mess of fish now and then, and make the Beaverhead a couple of camps later? How'd that be?"

"That's all right, I think," said Rob. "I'd

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

like to get a look at the main river, to see why the names change on it so. First it's the main Missouri; then they conclude to call it the Jefferson—only because the other two forks spread so wide there. Then it runs along all right, and all at once they call it the Beaverhead. And before it gets used to that name they change it to Red River for no reason at all, or because it heads south and runs near a painted butte. Yet it is one continuous river all the way."

"The real way to name a river," said Billy, sagely, is after you know all about it. You got to remember that Lewis and Clark saw this for the first time. By the time we make the Beaverhead Rock, we'll be willing to say they had a hard job. People could get lost in these hills even now, if they stepped off the road."

"All set for the Beaverhead Rock!" said Uncle Dick, decisively.

Soon they had settled to their steady jog, Nigger sometimes getting lost in the willows, and Sleepy straying off in his hunt for thistles when the country opened out more. They did not hurry, but moved along among the meadows and fields, talking, laughing, studying the wide and varying landscape about them. That

ON THE MISSOURI

night, as Billy had promised them, they had their first trout for supper, which Billy brought in after a short sneak among the willows with a stick for a rod and a grasshopper for bait.

"That's nothing," said he. "I'll take you to where's some real fishing, if you like."

"Where's that?" demanded John, who also was getting very keen set for sport of some sort.

"Oh, off toward the utmost source of the true Missouri!" said he. "You just wait. I'll show you something."

CHAPTER XXV

BEAVERHEAD CAMP

"IT'S quite a bit of country, ater all, between the Forks and the head, isn't it?" remarked Rob, on their fourth day out from the junction of the river. "I don't blame them for taking a month to it."

"We're beating them on their schedule, at that," said the studious John. "At the Forks we were exactly even up, July 27th; we'd beat them just exactly one year at that point, which they called the head of the river. But they went slow in here, in these big beaver meadows; ten miles daily was big travel, wading, and not half of that gained in actual straight distance. It took them ten days to the Beaverhead. How far's that from here, Billy?"

"Well, what do you think?" said Billy, pulling up and sitting crosswise in his saddle as he turned. "See anything particular from this side the hills?"

"I know!" exclaimed Rob. "That's the Rock over yonder—across the river."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Check it up on the *Journal*, Rob," said Uncle Dick.

Rob dismounted and opened his saddle pocket, producing his copy of the cherished work.

"Sure it is!" said he. "Here it says:

"The Indian woman recognized the point of a high plain to our right which she informed us was not very distant from the summer retreat of her nation on a river beyond the mountains which runs to the west. this hill she says her nation calls the beaver's head from a conceived re(se)mblance of it's figure to the head of that animal. she assures us that we shall either find her people on this river or on the river immediately west of it's source; which from it's present size cannot be very distant. as it is now all important with us to meet with those people as soon as possible I determined to proceed tomorrow with a small party to the source of the principal stream of this river and pass the mountains to the Columbia; and down that river untill I found the Indians; in short it is my resolution to find them or some others who have horses if it should cause me a trip of one month.

"So that must be the Rock over yonder. We're below the cañon, and below the Wisdom, and below the Philanthropy, and below the end of the railroad, and in the third valley. Besides, look at it. Just as sure as Sacágawea was about it!"

"You're right," said Billy. "That's the Point of Rocks, as it's called now."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

They made down to the edge of the valley and went into camp across from the great promontory which so long had served as landmark in all that country. That night all of them forded the river horseback and rode close to the historic point. Jesse, who was prowling around on foot, as was his habit, closely examining all he saw, suddenly stooped, then rose with an exclamation.

"See what I've found!" said he.

"What is it—a gold nugget?" asked his uncle.

"No. An arrowhead. Funny one—looks like it was made of glass, and black glass at that."

Uncle Dick examined it closely.

"Jesse," said he, "that's one of the most interesting things we've run across on this whole trip. Did you know that?"

"No. Why?"

"You wouldn't think that arrowhead was going to take you to the true head of the Missouri, and to good fishing for trout and grayling, would you?"

"Why, no! How's that?"

"I'll tell you. That's an obsidian arrowhead. The Bannacks and Shoshonis got that black, glassy stuff at one place—the Obsidian Cliff,



JESSE. SUDDENLY STOOPED, THEN ROSE WITH AN EXCLAMATION



ON THE MISSOURI

in Yellowstone Park! Those old trails that Lewis saw to the south were trails that crossed the Divide south of here. They put the Indians on Snake River waters. These tribes hunted down there. They knew the head of the Red Rock. They knew the head of the Madison. They knew the Gibbon River, and they knew the Norris Geyser Basin, up in Yellowstone Park. It's all right to say the Indians were afraid to go into Yellowstone Park among the geysers, but they did. They knew the Obsidian Cliff—close by the road, it is, and one of the features of the Park, as it now is.

“It's a far shot that arrow will carry you, son. It will show you more of these Indian trails than even Lewis and Clark ever knew. Of course, they didn't want to go south; they wanted north and west, because they knew the latitude and longitude of the mouth of the Columbia River. They knew that was north-west. They knew any water they got on, once over the Divide, would run into the Columbia, and they could see the Rockies, just on ahead to the west. As Billy has said, the Indian girl always was telling them that her people lived along in here. An obsidian arrow meant nothing to them. But it meant much to later explorers to the south of here.”

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"It's a good specimen he's got," said Billy, looking it over. "The Indians liked to work obsidian; it would cleave so sharp and clean. I thought they had them all picked up, long ago. Up in the Shoshoni Cove they found a good many, first and last. All this was their hunting ground. A little over the Divide it gets awfully rough, and not much game."

They spent some time around the Rock, examining it, finding the cliff to be about one hundred and fifty feet in height and giving a good view out over the valley plains, over which one could see many miles, and from which the great rock itself could be seen for great distances.

"Here was the old ford of the road agents' trail," said Billy. "They crossed here and headed out, east and south, for the hills between here and Virginia City. They were hunting for easier money than beaver then, though—gold! This was the murderers' highway, right by here. Over a hundred men were murdered on this hundred miles."

They went back to their encampment and, after their simple preparations were over for the evening, spread out their books and maps once more, John endeavoring laboriously to fill in the gaps of his own map; rather hard to do,

ON THE MISSOURI

since they had not followed the actual stream course on their way up with the pack train.

"This Wisdom River, now," said he, "must have been a puzzler, sure enough. That's called the Big Hole to-day. I'll bet she was a beaver water, too, as well as full of trout. Wonder if she had any grayling in her. Here's a town down below here, near the mouth of the Red Rock, called Grayling."

"Must have been grayling in all these upper Missouri waters," nodded Billy. "I don't think the *Journal* mentions them, but they saw whitefish, and the two often go together, though by no means always. The Madison is a grayling stream, or was—the South Fork's good now, and so is Grayling Creek, or was. The headwaters of the Red Rock were full of grayling once. The trouble is, so many motor cars now, that everybody gets in, and they soon fish a stream out."

"Shall we get to see a grayling?" asked Rob. "You know, we got the Arctic grayling on the Bell River, in the Arctic regions. They call them 'bluefish' up there. They're fine."

"So are these fine. I'd rather catch one grayling than a dozen trout. But they're getting mighty scarce, and I think before long there won't be any left."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"But look what a beaver country this must have been!" he added, waving a hand each way. "Fifty by two hundred miles, and then some. No wonder the trappers came. It wasn't long before they and the Blackfeet mixed it, all along in here."

"Listen," said Uncle Dick, "and I'll tell you a little beaver story, right out of the *Journal*."

"Aw—the *Journal*!" said Jesse. "I'd rather catch one!"

"Wait for my story, and you'll see how important a small thing may be that might make all the difference in the world. Now the hero of my story is a beaver. I don't know his name.

"Look on your map, just above here—that's the mouth of the Wisdom, or Big Hole, River, that Lewis and Drewyer explored first, while poor Clark, with his sore leg, was toiling up with his boat party, after he was better of his sickness.

"Now the Wisdom was a good-sized river, too, almost as big as the Jefferson, though broken into channels. Lewis worked it out and came back to the Jefferson at its mouth, and started on again, up the Jefferson. As was their custom, he wrote a note and put it in a cleft stick and stuck it up where Clark

ON THE MISSOURI

could see it when he got up that far. He put it on a green stick, poplar or willow, and stuck it in the bar. It told Clark to take the left-hand stream, not the one on the right—the Wisdom.

“Well, along comes Mr. Beaver that night, and gnaws off the pole and swims away with it, note and all! I don’t know what his family made out of the note, but if he’d been as wise as some of the magazine-story beavers, he could have read it, all right.

“Now when Clark came along, tired and worn out, all of them, the note was gone. They also, therefore, went up the Wisdom and not the Jefferson. Clark sent Shannon ahead up the Wisdom to hunt. But he turned back when the river got too shallow. Result, Shannon lost for three days, and not his fault. He went away up till he found the boats could not have passed; then he hustled back to the mouth and guessed the party were above him up the other fork—where he guessed right. They then were all on the Jefferson. Lost time, hunting for Shannon, and they couldn’t find him. All due to the beaver eating off the message pole. If Shannon had died, it would have been due to that beaver.

“That’s only part. In the shallow water a

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

canoe swept down out of control. It ran over Whitehouse, another man, on a bar, and nearly broke his leg; it would have killed him sure if the water had been three inches shallower. That would have been another man lost.

"Not all yet. A canoe got upset in the shallow water up there on the Wisdom, and wet everything in it. Result, they lost so much cargo—foodstuffs, etc.—that they just abandoned that canoe right there and lost her cargo, after carrying it three thousand miles, for over a year! All to be charged to the same beaver. Well, you and I have spoken before about the extreme danger of a land party and a boat party trying to travel together.

"The next time Lewis left a note, he used a dry stick, and he felt mortified at not having thought to do that in the first place. Well, that's my beaver story. It shows how a little thing may have big consequences—just as this arrowhead that Jesse found points out a long trail."

"And by that time," said John, bending again over his map, "they were needing every pound of food and every minute of their time and every bit of every man's strength. The poor fellows were almost worn out. Now they began to complain for the first time. We don't

ON THE MISSOURI

hear any more now about dances at night around the camp fire."

"Yes," said Uncle Dick. "Now they all were having their proving. It would have been easy for them to turn back; most men would have done so. But they never thought of that. All the men wanted was to get away from the boats and get on horseback."

"But they didn't yet know where to go!"

"No, not yet. And now comes the most agonizing and most dramatic time in the whole trip, when it needed the last ounce and the last inch of nerve. Read us what Lewis said in his *Journal*, Rob. He was on ahead, and every man now was hustling, because there were the mountains 'right at them,' as they say down South."

Rob complied, turning the pages of their precious book until he reached the last march of Lewis beyond the last forks of the river:

"Near this place we fell in with a large and plain Indian road which came into the cove from the N.E. and led along the foot of the mountains to the S.W. o(b)liquely approaching the main stream which we had left yesterday. this road we now pursued to the S.W. at 5 miles it passed a stout stream which is a principal fork of the ma(i)n stream and falls into it just above the narrow pass between the two cliffs before mentioned and which we now saw before us. here we halted and breakfasted on the last of our venison, having yet

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

a small piece of pork in reserve. after eating we continued our rout through the low bottom of the main stream along the foot of the mountains on our right the valley for 5 Mls. further in a S.W. direction was from 2 to 3 miles wide the main stream now after discarding two stream(s) on the left in this valley turns abruptly to the West through a narrow bottom between the mountains. the road was still plain, I therefore did not not despair of shortly finding a passage over the mountains and of taisting the waters of the great Columbia this evening."

"Well, what do you think? Clean nerve, eh? I think so, and so do you. If he had not had, he never would have gotten across. And Simon Fraser then would have beaten us to the mouth of the Columbia, and altered the whole history of the West and Northwest. Well, at least our beaver, that carried off Lewis's note, did not work that ruin, but it might have been responsible, even for that; for now a missed meeting with the Shoshonis would have meant the failure of the whole expedition.

"A great deal more Lewis did than he ever was to know he had done. He died too soon even to know much about the swift rush of the fur traders into this bonanza. And few of the fur traders ever lived to guess the rush of the placer miners of 1862 and 1863 into this same bonanza—right where we are camping now, on the old Robbers' Trail. And not many

ON THE MISSOURI

of the placer miners and other early adventurers of that day dreamed of anything but gold. The copper mines of this country have built up towns and cities, not merely camps.

“Even had Lewis and his man Fields, whose name he gave to Boulder Creek, and who killed the panther which gave Panther Creek its name—pushed on up Panther Creek, which now is known as Pipestone Creek, and stepped over the crest to where the city of Butte is to-day, they hardly would have suspected copper. Lewis set down the most minute details in botany, even now. He studied and described his last new bird, the sage hen, with much detail. Yet for more than a month and a half he and his men had been wearing out their moccasins on gold pebbles, and they never panned a color or dreamed a dream of it. It was lucky for America they did not.

“They found copper at Butte in 1876, the year of the Custer massacre. I wouldn’t like to say how much Butte, just over yonder hills, has earned to date, but in her first twenty years she turned out over five hundred million dollars. And twenty years ago she paid in one year fourteen million dollars in dividends, and carried a pay roll of two million dollars a month, for over eight thousand miners, and

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

gave the world over fifty million dollars in metals in that one year! In ten years she paid in dividends alone over forty-three million dollars. In one year she sold more copper, gold, and silver from her deep mines than would have paid three times the whole price we paid for all the Louisiana that Lewis and Clark and you and I have been exploring! And that doesn't touch the fur and the placer gold and the other mines and the cattle and wool and the farm products and the lumber. No man can measure what wealth has gone out from this country right under our noses here. And all because Lewis and his friend and their men wouldn't quit. And their expense allowance was twenty-five hundred dollars!

"This was on our road to Mandalay, young gentlemen, right here through these gray foothills and green willow flats! Beyond the hills was still all the wealth of the Columbia, of the Pacific Northwest also. This trail brought us to the end of all our roads—face to face with Asia. Was it enough, all this, as the result of one young man's wish to do something for the world? Did he do it? Did he have his wish?"

His answer was in the silence with which his words were received. Our young adventurers, though they had been used to stirring

ON THE MISSOURI

scenes all their lives, had never yet been in any country which gave them the thrill they got here, under the Beaverhead Rock.

"She's one wonderful river!" said Billy Williams, after a time. "And those two scouts were two wonderful men!"

CHAPTER XXVI

THE JUMP-OFF CAMP

TWO days later, on August 4th, the travelers had pushed on up the valley of the Missouri, to what was known as the Two Forks, between the towns of Grayling and Red Rock. They pitched their last camp, as nearly as they could determine, precisely where the Lewis and Clark party made their last encampment east of the Rockies, at what they called the Shoshoni Cove. This the boys called the Jump-off Camp, because this was where the expedition left its boats, and, ill fed and worn out, started on across the Divide for the beginning of their great journey into the Pacific Northwest.

Now they were under the very shoulders of the Rockies, and, so closely had they followed the narrative of the first exploration of the great river, and so closely had their own journey been identified with it, that now they were almost as eager and excited over the last stages of the journey to the summit as though it lay before them personally, new, unknown and un-

ON THE MISSOURI

tried. They hardly could wait to resume their following out of the last entangled skein of the great narrative.

"We've caught them at last, Uncle Dick!" exclaimed Jesse, spreading out his map on top of one of the kyacks in which Nigger had carried his load of kitchen stuff. "We've got almost a week the start of them here. This is August 4th, and it was August 10th when Lewis got here."

"And by that time he'd been everywhere else!" said Rob. "Let's figure him out—tying him up with that note the beaver carried off. That beaver certainly made a lot of trouble."

"Lewis left the note at the mouth of the Wisdom on August 4th. On August 5th Clark got there and went up the Wisdom. On August 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, Shannon was lost up the Wisdom. On August 6th, Drewyer met Clark coming up the Wisdom River and turned him back; and Clark sent Field up the Wisdom after Shannon. Meantime Lewis had gone down to the junction at the Wisdom, not meeting the boats above the junction. He met Clark, coming back down the Wisdom with the boats. They then all went down to the mouth of the Wisdom and camped—that's about a day's

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

march below where we camped, at the Beaver-head Rock.

"Then Lewis saw something had to be done. He told Clark to bring on the boats as fast as he could. He then made up a fast-marching party—himself, Drewyer, Shields, and McNeal—with packs of food and Indian trading stuff; he didn't forget that part—and they four hit the trail in the high places only, still hunting for those Indians they'd been trying to find ever since they left the Great Falls. They were walkers, that bunch, for they left the Wisdom early August 9th, and they got here late on August 10th. That was going some!"

"Yes, but poor Clark didn't get up here to where we are now until August 17th, a whole week later than Lewis. And by that time Lewis had come back down to this place where we are right now, and he was mighty glad to meet Clark. If he hadn't, he'd have lost his Indians. You tell it now, Billy!" concluded Jesse, breathless.

"You mean, after Captain Lewis started west from here to cross the summit?"

"Yes."

"All right. You can see why he went up this upper creek—it was the one that led straight to the top. The Red Rock River, as they now

ON THE MISSOURI

call the stream below what they call the Beaver-head River—it's all one stream—bends off sharp south. The Horse Prairie Creek takes you straight up to Lemhi Pass, which ought to be called the Lewis Pass, but isn't, though he was the first across it. Lewis was glad when he got to what they called the source, the next day after that.

“Now, he didn't find any Indians right away. I allow he'd followed an Indian road toward that pass, but the tracks faded out. He knew he was due to hit Columbia waters now, beyond yon range, but what he wanted was Indians, so he kept on.

“Now all at once—I think it was August 11th, the same day he left camp here—about five miles up this creek, he saw an Indian, on horseback, two miles off! That was the first Indian they had seen since they left the Mandans the spring before. But Mr. Indian pulled his freight. That was when Lewis was ‘soarly chagrined’ with Shields, who had not stayed back till Lewis got his Indian gentled down some; he had him inside of one hundred yards at one time. He ‘abraided’ Shields for that; he says.

“But now, anyhow, they knew there was such a thing as an Indian, so they trailed this

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

one, but they couldn't catch him, and Lewis was scared he'd run all the other Indians back West. But on the next morning he ran into a big Indian road, that ran up toward the pass. There was a lowish mountain, running back about a half mile. The creek came out of the foot of that mountain ——"

"I know," interrupted John, who had his *Journal* spread before him. "Here's what he said:

"At the distance of 4 miles further the road took us to the most distant fountain of the waters of the Mighty Missouri in surch of which we have spent so many toilsome days and wristless nights. thus far I had accomplished one of those great objects on which my mind has been unalterably fixed for many years, judge then of the pleasure I felt in all(a)ying my thirst with this pure and ice-cold water which issues from the base of a low mountain or hill of a gentle ascent for $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile. the mountains are high on either hand leave this gap at the head of this rivulet through which the road passes."

"Go on, Billy," said Uncle Dick. "That's all he says about actually crossing the Divide at Lemhi Pass! Tell us where they found the village."

"Well, sir, that was beyond the Lemhi Pass, up in there, thirty miles from here, about. They'd been traveling, all right. Now that was August 12th, and on August 13th they were

over, and had their first drink of 'chaste and icy water out a Columbia river head spring.' And all the while, back of us, poor old Clark and his men were dragging the boats up the chaste and icy waters of the Jefferson.

"Now that day they got into rough country, other side; but they didn't care, because that day they saw two women and a man. They run off, too, and Lewis was 'soar' again; but all at once they ran plumb into three more—one an old woman, one a young woman, and one a kid. The young woman runs off. Now you ought to seen Cap. Lewis make friends with them people.

"He gives them some beads and awls and some paint. Drewyer don't know their language, but he talks sign talk. He gets the old girl to call the young woman back. She comes back. Lewis gives her some things, too. He paints up their cheeks with the vermilion paint. From that time he had those womenfolks, young and old, feeding from the hand.

"So now they all start out for the village, which Lewis knew was not far away. Sure enough, they meet about sixty braves riding down the trail; and I reckon if Meriwether Lewis ever felt like stealing horses, it was then.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Now the women showed their paint and awls and things. Lewis pulls up his shirt sleeve and shows his white skin. The chief gets down and hugs him, though that was the first white man they'd ever met in their lives. Then they had a smoke, like long-lost brothers. Then they went back to the Indian camp, four miles. Then Lewis allows something to eat would go fine, but old Cameahwait, the head man, hands him a few berries and choke cherries, which was all they had to eat. You see, this band was working east now, in the fall, to better hunting range—they had only bows and arrows.

"Lewis sends Drewyer and Shields out to kill some meat. The old chief makes a sand map for Lewis, but says he can't get through, that way—meaning down the Salmon River, west of the Divide. Anyhow, they'd have no boats, for the timber was no good. So horses begin to look still better to Lewis.

"They had a good party, but nothing to eat, and the Indians were scared when he got them to know there were more white men back of him, on the east side the hill. He couldn't talk, so he told it in beads, and jockeyed along till he got a half dozen to start back with him. So on August 16th he got back to this place here

again, east of the summit, right where we're camped now, and he had plenty Indians now—and nothing to feed them.

"But he waited to find Clark, and he didn't know how far downstream Clark was, and he was afraid he'd lose his Indians any minute. So he writes a note to Clark, and gives it to his best man, Drewyer, to carry downstream fast as he can go. Lewis had promised to trade goods for horses, but the Shoshonis didn't see any boats, and so they got suspicious.

"Well, it was night. Lewis had the head man and about a couple of dozen others in camp. He was plumb anxious. But next day, the 17th, he tells Drewyer to hot-foot down the river, with an Indian or two along with him. About two hours, an Indian came back and said that Lewis had told the truth, for he had seen boats on the river.

"Now between seven and eight o'clock that morning, Clark and Chaboneau and the Indian girl, Sacágawea, all were walking on ahead of the boats, the girl a little ahead. All at once she begins to holler. They look up, and here comes several Indians and Drewyer with the note from Lewis. There's nothing to it, after that."

"Go on, Uncle Dick; you tell it now!" demanded Jesse, all excited.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"You mean about Sacágawea?"

"Yes, sir."

"It sounds like a border romance—and it was a border romance, literally.

"Here, on the river where she used to live, a young Indian woman ran out of the crowd and threw her arms around Sacágawea. It was the girl who had been captured with her at the Three Forks, six years or more ago, by the Minnetarees! They had been slaves together. This other girl had escaped and got back home, by what miracle none of us ever will know.

"But now, when Sacágawea had told her people how good the white men were, there was no longer any question of the friendship all around. As Billy expresses it, there was nothing to it, after that.

"You'd think that was asking us to believe enough? But no. The girl rushes up to Cameahwait, the chief, and puts her arms around him, too. He's her brother, that's all!

"Well, this seemed to give them the entrée into the best Shoshoni circles. Beyond this it was a question of details. Lewis stayed here till August 24th, trading for horses for all he was worth. He got five, for five or six dollars each in goods. They *cached* what goods they

ON THE MISSOURI

could spare or could not take, hid their canoes, and on August 24th bade the old Missouri good-by—for that year at least.

“They now went over west of the Divide, to the main village, to trade for more horses. They cut up their oars and broke up their remaining boxes and made pack saddles to carry their goods.

“Meantime, Clark and eleven men, all the good carpenters, had started on August 18th to cross the Divide and explore down for a route on the stream which we now know took them to the Salmon River. They traveled two days, to the Indian camp. Now the *Journal* takes page after page, describing these Indians.

“Now it was Clark’s turn to go ahead and find a way by horse or boat down to the Columbia. His notes tell of his troubles:

“August 20th Tuesday 1805 “So-So-ne” the Snake Indians Set out at half past 6 oClock and proceeded on (met many parties of Indians) thro’ a hilley Countrey to the Camp of the Indians on a branch of the Columbia River, before we entered this Camp a Serimonious hault was requested by the Chief and I smoked with all that Came around, for Several pipes, we then proceeded on to the Camp & I was introduced into the only Lodge they had which was pitched in the Center for my party all the other Lodges made of bushes, after a fiew Indian Seremonies I informed the Indians (of) the object of our journey our good intentions toward them my Con-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

sirn for their distressed Situation, what we had done for them in makeing a piece with the Minitarras Mandans Rickara &c. for them. and requested them all to take over their horses & assist Capt Lewis across &c. also informing them the o(b)ject of my journey down the river, and requested a guide to accompany me, all of which was repeited by the Chief to the whole village.

“Those pore people Could only raise a Sammon & a little dried Choke Cherries for us half the men of the tribe with the Chief turned out to hunt the antilopes, at 3 oClock after giveing a fiew Small articles as presents I set out accompanied by an old man as a Guide I endeavored to procure as much information from thos people as possible without much Suckcess they being but little acquainted or effecting to be So. I left one man to purchase a horse and overtake me and proceeded on thro a wide rich bottom on a beaten Roade 8 miles Crossed the river and encamped on a Small run, this evening passed a number of old lodges, and met a number of men women children & horses, met a man who appeared of Some Consideration who turned back with us, we halted a woman & gave us 3 Small Sammon, this man continued with me all night and partook of what I had which was a little Pork verry Salt. Those Indians are verry attentive to Strangers &c. I left our interpreter & his woman to accompany the Indians to Capt Lewis to-morrow the Day they informed me they would Set out I killed a Pheasent at the Indian Camp larger than a dungal (dunghill) fowl with f(1)eshey protubrances about the head like a turkey. Frost last night.

“Clark got more and more discouraging news about getting down the Lemhi River, on which they were camped, and the big river

ON THE MISSOURI

below—the Salmon River. But with the old man for guide, he went about seventy miles, into the gorge of the Salmon River, before he would quit. But he found that no man could get down that torrent, with either boat or pack train. He gave it up. They were nearly starved when they got back at the Indian camp, where Lewis and the other men were trading. Sacágawea had kept all her people from going on east to the buffalo country, though now they none of them had anything to eat but a few berries and choke cherries. If the Indians had left, or if they had been missed by the party, the expedition would have ended there. The Indian girl once more had saved the Northwest for America, very likely.

“Now the old Indian guide said he knew a way across, away to the north. They hired him as guide. They traded for twenty-nine horses, and at last packed them and set out for the hardest part of their journey and the riskiest, though they did not know that then. On August 30th they set out. At the same time Cameahwait and his band set off east, after their fall hunt.

“That was the last that Sacágawea ever saw of her brother or her girl friend. She went on with her white husband, into strange tribes—

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

nothing further for her to look forward to now, for she was leaving home for another thousand miles, in the opposite direction.

"And that ended the long, hard, risky time the company of Volunteers for Discovery of the Northwest had in crossing the Continental Divide. We lie at the foot of their pass. Yonder they headed out for the setting sun!"

"Let's go on after them, Uncle Dick!" exclaimed Jesse. "We've got a good outfit, and we're not afraid!"

"I've been expecting that," rejoined their leader. "I was afraid you'd want to go through! But we can't do it, fellows, not this year at least. There's the school term we've got to think of. We're nearly three thousand miles from St. Louis. That means we'll have to choose between two or three weeks of the hardest kind of mountain work and back out when we've got nowhere, and taking a fast and simple trip to the true head of the Missouri. Which would you rather do?"

"We don't like to turn back," said Rob.

"Well, it wouldn't be turning back, really. It would be going to the real head of the Missouri—and neither Lewis nor Clark ever did that, or very many other men." Billy spoke quietly.

ON THE MISSOURI

"But don't think," he added, "that I'm not game to go on into the Bitter Roots, if you say so. I'm promising you she's rough, up in there. The trail they took was a fright, and I don't see how they made it. It ran to where this range angles into the corner of the Bitter Roots, and crossed there. They crossed another pass, too, and that makes three passes, from here. They got here July 10th, and three days later at last they hit the Lolo Creek trail, over the Lolo Pass—the way old Chief Joseph came east when he went on the war trail; he fought Gibbon in the battle of the Big Hole, above here."

Rob sighed. "Well, it only took Lewis and Clark a couple of months to get through. But still, we've only got a couple of weeks.

"What do you say, John? Shall we go south to the head with Billy?" Uncle Dick did not decide it alone.

"Vote yes, in the circumstances," said John. "Hate to quit her, though!"

"You, Jess?"

"Oh, all right, I'll haul off if the rest do. We'll get to fish some, won't we?"

"All you want. The best trout and grayling fishing there is left anywhere."

"It's a vote, Uncle Dick!" said Rob. "This is our head camp on this leg of the trip."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"I think that's wise," said Uncle Dick.

"But before we leave here I want you to have a last look at the map."

They spread it open in the firelight.

"This point is where Clark came and got the canoes the next year, 1806. They came back over the Lolo, but took a short cut, east of this mountain range, forty miles east of the other trail. They came over the Gibbon Pass—which ought to be called Clark's Pass and isn't—and headed southeast, the Indian girl being of use again now. They came down Grasshopper Creek, walking over millions of dollars of gold gravel, and found their canoes, not over a few hundred yards from where we sit, like enough.

"Then Clark and his men got in the boats and headed home. Sacágawea showed them the trail up the Gallatin, over the Bozeman Pass, to the Yellowstone. And they went down that to its mouth.

"And now, one last touch to show what nerve those captains really had. Either could cut loose.

"Near what is now Missoula, on the Bitter Root—which Lewis called Clark's Fork, after Clark, just as Clark named his Salmon River tributary after Lewis—Lewis took ten men

ON THE MISSOURI

and headed across lots for the Great Falls and then for the head of the Marias River!

"Surely, they began to scatter. Clark had left twenty men, the Indian girl and her baby, and they had fifty horses. At this place here, where we are in camp, Clark split his party again, some going down in the boats, some on horseback, but all traveling free and happy. They got here July 10th, and three days later were at the Three Forks, both parties, only one hour apart! They certainly had good luck in getting together.

"On that same day, Sergeant Ordway took six boats and nine men and started down the Missouri to meet Lewis at the Great Falls, or the mouth of the Marias. They made it down all right, and that is all we can say, for no record exists of that run downstream.

"Now, get all this straight in your heads and see how they had scattered, in that wild, unknown country, part in boats, part on shore—the riskiest way to travel. All the sergeants are captains now. We have four different companies.

"Gass is at the Great Falls, where Lewis split his party. Ordway is on his way down the river from the Three Forks to the Falls. Clark is with the horses now, headed east for

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the Yellowstone—which not a soul in that party knew a thing about, except the Indian girl, who insisted they would come out on the Yellowstone. And on that river the Clark party divided once more, part going in boats and part on horseback!

“Now figure five parties out of thirty-one men. Look at your map, remembering that the two land parties were in country they had never seen before. Yet they plan to meet at the mouth of the Yellowstone, over twelve hundred miles from where we are sitting here! That’s traveling! That’s exploring! And their story of it all is as plain and simple and modest as though children had done it. There’s nothing like it in all the world.”

He ceased to speak. The little circle fell silent.

“Go on, go on, Uncle Dick!” urged Jess. “You’ve not allowed us to read ahead that far. You said you’d rather we wouldn’t. Tell us, now.”

“No. Fold up your maps and close your journals for a while, here at our last camp on the greatest trail a river ever laid.

“We’re going fishing now, fellows—to-morrow we start east, gaining two years on Lewis and Clark. When we get down near the Yel-

ON THE MISSOURI

lowstone and Great Falls country again, going east ourselves, we'll just finish up the story of the map till we reach the Mandans—which is where we left our own good ship *Adventurer*.

"To-morrow we head south, the other way. 'This story is to be continued in our next,' as the story papers say.

"Good night. Keep all this in your heads. It is a great story of great men in a great valley, doing the first exploring of the greatest country in the world—the land that is drained by the Missouri and its streams!"

"Good luck, old tops!" he added, as he rose and stepped to the edge of the circle of light, waving his hand to the Divide above them. He stood looking toward the west.

"Whom are you speaking to, Uncle Dick?" asked John, as he heard no answer.

"I was just speaking to my friends, Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark. Didn't you see them pass our camp just now?"

CHAPTER XXVII

THE UTMOST SOURCE

THE Young Alaskans, who had followed faithfully the travels of Lewis and Clark from the mouth of the Missouri to the Continental Divide, now felt exultation that they had finished their book work so soon. But they felt also a greater interest in the thought that they now might follow out a part of the great waterway which not even Lewis and Clark ever had seen. They were all eagerness to be off. The question was, what would be the best route and what would be the transportation?

"We still can spare a month in the West," said Uncle Dick, "and get back to St. Louis in time to catch the fall school term. That will give us time for a little sport. How shall we get down south, two hundred miles, and back to the Three Forks? What do you say, Billy?"

"Well, sir," answered the young ranchman, "we've got more help than Lewis and Clark had. We can use the telegraph, the telephone, the railway cars, and the motor car—besides

ON THE MISSOURI

old Sleepy and Nigger and the riding horses. We can get about anywhere you like, in as much or little time as you like. If you leave it to me, I'd say, get a man at Dillon or Grayling—I've friends in both towns—to take the pack train back to my ranch on the Gallatin——"

"But we don't want to say good-by to Sleepy!" broke in Jesse. "He's a lot of fun."

"Well, don't say good-by to him—we'll see him when we come north again, and maybe we'll all go in the mountains together again, some other year.

"But now, to save time and skip over a lot of irrigated farm country, how would it do to take the O.S.L. Railway train, down at the Red Rock, and fly south, say to Monida on the line between Montana and Idaho? That's right down the valley of the Red Rock River, which is our real Missouri source.

"Now, at Monida we can get a motor car to take us east across the Centennial Valley and the Alaska Basin ——"

"That's good—Alaska!" said Rob.

"Yes? Well, all that country is flat and hard and the motor roads are perfect, so we could get over the country fast—do that two hundred miles by rail and car a lot faster than old Sleepy would.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

“Now, we can go by motor car from Monida right to the mouth of Hell Roaring Cañon, at the foot of Mount Jefferson, and up in there, at the head of that cañon, there is a wide hole in the top of the mountains, where the creek heads that everybody now calls Hell Roaring Creek. J. V. Brower went up in there with a rancher named Culver, who lived at the head of Picnic Creek, at the corner of the Alaska Basin, and Brower wrote a book about it.¹ He called that cañon Culver Cañon, but the name does not seem to have stuck. Now, Culver’s widow, the same Lilian Hackett Culver whose picture Brower prints as the first woman to see the utmost source of the Missouri, still lives on her old homestead, where a full-sized river bursts out from a great spring, right at the foot of a rocky ridge. She’s owner of the river a couple of miles, I guess, down to the second dam.

“She stocked that water, years ago, every kind of trout she could get—native cutthroat, rainbow, Dolly Varden, Eastern brook, steel-heads, and I don’t know what all, including grayling—and she has made a living by selling the fishing rights there to anglers who stop at her house. I’ve been there many times.

¹ *The Missouri and Its Utmost Source*, J. V. Brower, 1896.

ON THE MISSOURI

"I've fished a lot everywhere, but that is the most wonderful trout water in all the world, in my belief. I've seen grayling there up to three pounds, and have taken many a rainbow over eight pounds; one was killed there that went twelve and one-half pounds. I've caught lots of steelheads there of six and seven pounds, and 'Dollies' as big, and natives up to ten pounds—there is no place in the West where all these species get such weights.

"They call the place now 'Lil Culver's ranch.' She is held in a good deal of affection by the sportsmen who have come there from all over the country. She is now a little bit of an old lady, sprightly as a cricket, and very bright and well educated. She was from New England, once, and came away out here. She's a fine botanist and she used to have books and a lot of things. Lives there all alone in a little three-room log house right by the big spring. And she's the first woman to see the head of the Missouri. Her husband was the first man. That looks sort of like headquarters, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does!" said Rob. "Let's head in there. What do you say, Uncle Dick?"

"It looks all right to me," said Uncle Dick. "That's right on our way, and it's close, his-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

torically and topographically, to the utmost source. You surely have a good head, Billy, and you surely do know all this country of the Big Bend."

"I ought to," said Billy. "Well, then suppose we call that a go? We can fish on the spring creek, and live at Lil Culver's place; you can drive right there with a car. Then the mail road runs right on east, past the foot of Jefferson Mountain and over the Red Rock Pass—Centennial Pass, some call it—to Henry's Lake. All the fishing you want over there—the easiest in the world—but only one kind of trout—natives—and they taste muddy now, at low water. Too easy for fun, you'll say.

"But at the head of Henry's Lake is a ranch house, what they call a 'dude place.' I know the owner well; he's right on the motor road from Salt Lake to Helena and Butte, and just above the road that crosses the Targhee Pass, east of Henry's Lake, to the Yellowstone Park.

"Now, Henry's Lake was named after Andrew Henry, who was chased south from the Three Forks by the Blackfeet. Just north of there is the low divide called Raynold's Pass, after Captain Raynolds, a government explorer, about 1872. Suppose we kept our Monida car that far, and then sent it back home?

Then I could telegraph my folks to send my own car down there from my ranch, to meet us there at the head of Henry's Lake, say one week from now; that'll give us time to run the river up, easy.

"Then we'd have my car to run across Targhee, to the South Fork of the Madison—another source of the Missouri—and try out the grayling. We are now on the only grayling waters left in the West. All the heads of the Missouri used to have them. I thought you all might like to have a go at that. I can promise you good sport. We can have a tent and cook outfit brought down on my car from the ranch."

"Well, that looks like a time saver, sure," said John. "We finish things faster than Lewis and Clark, don't we?"

"Sure. Well, when you feel you have to start back east we can jump in the car and run back up north to my ranch, up the Gallatin. You can follow Sleepy over to Bozeman and Livingston, then; or you can go east by rail down the Yellowstone; or you can divide your party and part go by rail down the river to Great Falls, and meet at the Mandan villages, or somewhere. We can plan that out later if you like.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"But in this way you cover all that big sweep of country where the arm of the Continental Divide bends south and holds all these hundreds of streams around the Three Forks and below. We'd be skirting the rim of that great bend in the mountains, a sort of circle of something like two hundred miles across; and we'd be coming back to the old river again at the Forks. Looks to me that's about the quickest way we can cover our trip and the way to get the fullest idea of the real river."

"What do you vote, fellows?" asked their leader. "This looks like a very well-laid-out campaign, to me."

"So say we all of us!" answered Rob.

"That's right," added John and Jesse.

"All right, then," nodded Billy. "On our way! Roll them beds. Keep out your fishing tackle. I'll stop in town and telephone to Andy Sawyer to come on down to the livery at Red Rock and pick up our stock there, so we won't lose any time getting the train."

This well-thought-out plan worked so well that nothing of special interest happened in their steady ride down to the railroad, out of the historic cove, in among the fields and houses of the later land.

And to make quite as brief the story of their

ON THE MISSOURI

uneventful journey across the wide and treeless region below, it may be said that on the evening of the next day they pulled in at the little log-cabin hotel of Mrs. Culver, the first woman who ever saw the head of the true Missouri.

That lady, quaint and small, came out and made them welcome. "I've three beds, in two rooms," said she, "and you'll have to double up, but I can feed you all, I guess."

"Is there any fishing?" asked Jesse. But an instant later he answered himself. "Great Scott!" said he. "Look at that trout jump. He's big as a whale. Look it—look it, fellows!"

They turned as he pointed down the hill to the wide, clear water of the spring creek. A dozen splashes and rings showed feeding fish, and large ones.

"Oh, yes," said their hostess, indifferently. "There's a good many of them in there. They seem to run around more along toward evening."

The young sportsmen could not wait for supper. Hurriedly getting together their rods and reels, they soon had leaders and flies ready and were running down the slope after what bid fair to be rare sport with the great fish which they saw leaping.

CHAPTER XXVIII

SPORT WITH ROD AND REEL

THE three young Alaskans were all very fair masters of the art of fishing with the fly, and now surely had excellent opportunity to practice it. The trout and grayling were rising in scores, and for half a mile the surface of the bright water was broken into countless rings and ripples. Now and then some fish sprang entirely above the water. John and Jesse took the nearer shore, while Rob hurried around over the pole bridge at the head of the stream, just below the head spring.

"What have you got on, John?" asked Jesse.

"Jock Scott, No. 4," replied John. "Try a good big Silver Doctor; these big fellows ought to take it."

They began to cast, trying to reach the mid-channel, where, over the white sand of the channel, the fish were rising most vigorously. All at once Jesse gave an exclamation.

"Wow! Look at that, hey?"

His fly had been taken by a great fish which had made for it a dozen feet away. The rod

ON THE MISSOURI

went up into an arch. Again and again the fish sprang high above the water, four, five, six times, one leap after another; and then came a long, steady savage run which carried Jesse down along the bank, following the fish. He had all he could do to master the powerful fish, but, keeping on a steady pressure, he at last got him close inshore, where John netted him.

"That's a steelhead—that's why he's such a jumper!" exclaimed John. "Well done, Jess!" exclaimed John, holding up the splendid fish to view. "Six pounds, if he's an ounce!"

A sudden shout from Rob, across the water, called their attention. He also was playing a heavy fish, which broke water again and again.

"What you got, Rob?" called John.

"Rainbow!" answered Rob, across the stream. "He's a buster, too!" And truly it was a fine one, for that night it weighed five and three-quarter pounds.

"Hurry, John—your turn now!" shouted Jess. "They're the fightingest fish you ever saw."

John began casting, while Jesse watched, working his fly to where he saw a heavy fish moving. An instant and he struck, the reel screeching as the fish made its run. This time the fish did not jump, but played deep, boring

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

and surging, but at last John conquered it and Jesse slipped the net under it.

"My! It's just like a big brook trout," said he. "I'll bet he'll go over five pounds."

"No," said John, sagely. "That's a Dolly Varden—looks a lot like a brook trout, but look at the blue ring around the red spots. They fight deep—don't jump like a rainbow. But the steelhead outjumps them all! Did you ever see such fishing! This beats the Arctic trout on Rat Portage."

They followed down the pond made by the dam, and literally one or other of the three was all the time playing a fish, and they all ran very large. When at last they answered the supper horn, Rob had five fish, John four, and Jesse two—the last a fine, fat grayling, the first he had ever taken below the Arctic Circle.

Uncle Dick's eyes opened very wide. "Well, Billy," said he, "you've made good! I never saw so many big trout taken that soon in any water I ever knew!"

"They get a lot of feed in that stream," said Billy. "The watercress holds a lot of stuff they eat, and there must be minnows in there, too. I've heard lots of men say that, for big fish, this beats any water they ever knew."

"Oh, maybe they don't run as big as they

ON THE MISSOURI

did," said Mrs. Culver; "I've known several rainbows over ten pounds taken here. One gentleman came for specimens to mount, and he caught a five-pound rainbow, but his friend made him throw it back because it was too little. Then they fished two days and didn't get any more rainbow at all; they're so savage, I think they get caught first. But you've got some good ones, haven't you? Well, I like to see a person have some sport when he comes here."

"How long have you lived here, Mrs. Culver?" asked Billy, that night at the dinner table.

"Oh, all my life, it seems," she laughed. "I was here early, in the 'nineties, when Mr. Brower came to get to the head of Hell Roaring. That was in 1895. He and my husband, Mr. William N. Culver, and Mr. Isaac Jacques went up there horseback. They called that Hell Roaring Cañon then, and I think most folks do yet, though Mr. Brower as a scientific explorer said he would call it Culver Cañon after that. He did, but his story of the exploration never got to be very widely known. I guess they were the first to get to the head, except Indians. The government surveyors never followed out the river above Upper Red Rock Lake.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"They made two tries at it. The first time was August 5, 1895. They left their horses and waded up the creek, till they came to a perpendicular rock across the cañon. It was hard going, so they turned back that day.

"On August 29th they tried it again. They went up Horse Camp Creek and left their horses at the foot of Hanson Mountain, and took one pack horse and cut across over Hanson Mountain and then went down into the Hell Roaring Creek; but they had to leave their pack horse then. Beyond that they took to the stream bed on foot, and this time they got up on top and followed the creek to its source.

"They came back all excited, saying they were the first ever to follow the Missouri to its head. They named a little lake, up near the summit, in a marshy flat, Lilian Lake, after me. Just a little way beyond that they found a big saucer-like spot in the round little hole up there—peaks all around it, like it had sunk down. Well, out of that circular marsh the creek comes. That's the head—the utmost source. The snow from the peaks feeds into that cup, or rather saucer, up on top, back of Mount Jefferson.

"I don't think they went as far toward the actual head as I did myself, for it was late

ON THE MISSOURI

and they had their horses to find. Now on September 26, 1895, I rode horseback up in there with Mr. Allen, and we rode right on up over Hanson, and down into Hell Roaring, and beyond where they left their pack horse. We rode almost all the way, and got into that Hole in the Mountains, as Mr. Brower calls the depressed valley up on top. But we rode on clear past it, three miles, and found the creek plain that far.

"Almost up to the top of the divide, the creek turns northeast. It comes out from under a big black rock, near a clump of balsam—like my spring here, only not so big. Mr. Brower and Mr. Culver had marked a rock and put down a copper plate for their discovery. I had a tin plate, and I scratched my name and the date on that. There wasn't any mark of anyone else there, and we were quite beyond the place where Mr. Brower stopped. So maybe I am the first person, certainly the first woman, to see the real upper spring of the Missouri River.

"Now here I am, all alone in the world, as you see. Would you like to see my pressed flowers and my other things?"

The young explorers looked at the tiny, thin little old lady with reverence, and did not say

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

anything for a long time, before they began to look at the treasured belongings of the far-away cabin home.

"Do you boys want to go up?" she asked, after a time.

"We came for that," said Rob.

"You couldn't climb up the cañon all the way, maybe. Do you think you could get up over the mountain, the way we did?"

"You don't know these boys," remarked Uncle Dick to her. "They're old mountain climbers and can go anywhere."

"They'd want a guide, and I couldn't go, now. And they'd want horses."

"Well, we'll leave out the guide, and we could leave out the horses, like enough, for we can go to the foot of the mountain in the car. But on the whole I can think we'll ride up, for a change."

"You can get horses down at the ranch a little way. I have none here now."

"All right. To-morrow we'll outfit for the climb."

"Well, I rode all the way. Now you go on the shoulder of this mountain back of us, above the spring, and work up the best you can, but keep your eye on Jefferson. Get up right high, before you head across to the cañon of the

ON THE MISSOURI

Missouri, so you can be above the high cliff that you can't get over in the bed of the stream. Then you go down in the cañon and cross, best you can, and then ride up on the far side, and then work off for the top of Jefferson.

"You'll know the little bowl on top the mountain. That's the top sponge. But the real head stream is even beyond that. You'll find my tin plate there, I guess, with my name and date.

"I'm glad you had some good fishing here. We'll have some of your trout for breakfast. The feather beds are made from wild-goose and duck feathers. It's been a great country for them."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE HEAD OF THE GREAT RIVER

BRIGHT and early they were in the saddle and off for the crowning experience of their long quest for the head of the great Missouri. Billy brought up the horses from the ranch below. The chauffeur from Monida said he "had not lost any mountains" and preferred not to make the ascent, so only five were in the party, Billy, of course, insisting on seeing the head of the river, in which he had had such interest all his life.

They took one pack horse, a few cooking implements, and such blankets as their hostess could spare, their own bed rolls and most of their equipment having gone back to Billy's ranch by his pack train. Their supply of food was only enough for two meals—supper and breakfast—but this gave them two days for the ascent, whereas Mrs. Culver had made it in one; so they felt sure of success.

Well used to mountain work, and guided by a good engineer, their Uncle Dick, who had

spent his life in work among wild countries, they wound easily in and among the shoulders of the hills, taking distance rather than sharp elevation, and so gradually and without strain to the horses working up the mountain that lay at one side of Mount Jefferson. When they were well up, they followed a long hogback that swung a little to the left, and at length turned for their deliberate plunge down into the steep valley of the stream. Here, among heavy tracts of fallen timber and countless tumbled rocks, they came at last to the white water of their river, now grown very small and easily fordable by the horses.

"As near as I can tell," said Uncle Dick, "we've got her whipped right now. This must be a good way above the place Brower and Culver left their horse. We're up seventy-six hundred and forty feet now by the aneroid. The valley is around seven thousand feet, and Brower makes the summit at eight thousand feet; so we've not so far to go now. We crossed above the upper Red Rock Lake, and Brower makes the whole distance, along the longest branch, only twenty miles from the head spring to the lake. A mile or two should put us at the edge of the Hole in the Mountains, as he calls his upper valley. What do you say—shall

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

we leave our horses and walk it, or try on up in the same way?"

"I vote against leaving the horses," said Rob. "It's nearly always bad to split an outfit, and bad to get away from your base of supplies. I'd say keep to the horses as high as they can get. A good mountain horse can go almost any place a man can, if you leave him alone. If it gets hard to ride, we can walk and lead, or drive them ahead of us over the down timber."

"And then, if we get them up to the Hole, we could camp up in there all night," suggested John. "Like enough, we'd be the first to do that, anyhow."

"And maybe the last," laughed Billy. "It'll sure be cold up in there, with no tent and not much bedding and none too much to eat. We're above the trout line, up here, and not far to go to timber line, if you ask me."

"Not so bad as that, Billy," commented Jesse. "Nine thousand, ninety-five hundred— isn't that about average timber line? We're only eight thousand at our upper valley, and we're not going to climb to the top of the peaks."

"Well, I'm game if you all are," said Billy. "We can make it through for one night, all

ON THE MISSOURI

right, for when the firewood runs out we can make camp and finish on foot."

"Go on ahead, Jesse," said Uncle Dick. "You're the youngest. Let's see how good a mountain man you are."

"All right!" said Jesse, stoutly. "You see."

Accordingly, they rode on up, slowly, for a little distance, allowing the horses plenty of time to make their way among rocks and over fallen poles. At last Jesse came to a halt and dismounted, leading his horse for a way, until he brought up at the foot of such a tangle of down timber and piled boulders that he could not get on. He turned, his face red with chagrin. "Well," he said, "I've never been here before. I guess a fellow has to figure it out."

"You go ahead now, John," laughed Uncle Dick. "Jess, fall to the rear; you're in disgrace."

"All right!" said John. "You watch me."

This time John rode back downstream a little, until clear of the patch of heavy down timber. Then he turned and swung up above the bed of the stream, angling up on the side of the mountain, and finally heading close to the foot of a tall escarpment which barred the horses for a way. Here he hugged the cut

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

face for a few yards and by good fortune found the way passable beyond for quite a distance.

"Not bad," said his leader. "Go on. I see you've got the idea of distance for elevation."

"Yes, sir," said John. "But I'm like Jesse—I've never been here before, and I don't know just where I'm going."

"Humph! Isn't that about the way Lewis and Clark were fixed, only all the way across?" scoffed Uncle Dick. "Go ahead, and if we have to get down and lead, I'll put Rob ahead, or Billy."

John gritted his teeth and spurred up his horse. "You give me time," said he, "and I'll take you up there."

He did pursue his edging away from the stream until he could no longer see the exact course. At last he pulled up. "We must have climbed three hundred feet," said he. "Where is it?"

"What do you say, Rob?" asked Uncle Dick.

"I'll stay behind and see that Mr. Pack Horse comes," replied Rob. "But I should think we might angle down a little now, because we're going up the wrong split. It's two-thirty o'clock, now, and we ought to raise the Hole pretty soon. I'd say off to the right a little

ON THE MISSOURI

now, wouldn't you, Billy, till we raised the Hole for sure?"

Billy nodded, and presently set out ahead. His practiced eye found a way through the hard going until at last they stood, at the left and above the stream's entrance into a roughly circular little depression, surrounded by a broken rim of high peaks.

"Here she is, fellows!" exclaimed Uncle Dick. "This is what we've been looking for! Yonder's the thread of the water, headed for New Orleans and the last jetty of the Mississippi. What's your pleasure now?"

"Well, sir," said Rob, who had for some time been afoot, leading his own horse and driving the pack horse ahead, "why not throw off here and finish her on foot, to the clean head, where Mrs. Culver left her tin plate? Here's a trickle of water and enough wood for fire, and the horses can get enough feed to last them for one night."

"All right," said Uncle Dick. "It's all in plain sight and we can't lose our horses, especially if we halter them all tight till we get back."

They now all dismounted and made their animals fast to the trees and stout bushes, first unlashng the pack.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Good work, Billy!" said Rob, as he helped cast off the lash rope. "She hasn't slipped an inch."

"More'n I can say," rejoined Billy. "I slipped a good many times, coming up, and barked my shins more'n an inch, I'm thinking."

"Lead off, Jess," said Uncle Dick, as they stood ready for the last march. "No, don't leave your coat; it will soon be cold, and it is always cold in the mountains when you stop walking. And you all have your match boxes?"

"Why, Uncle Dick," expostulated Jesse, "it's just over there, and we won't need any fire there, for we're coming right back."

"But, Jesse, haven't I told you always in new country to travel with matches and a hatchet, or at least a knife? No man can tell when he may get hurt or lost in mountain work, and then a fire is his first need. It's all right to know how to make a fire by friction, Indian way, but you can't always do that, and matches are surer and quicker. Never leave them."

They set out, their leader now in advance, Billy bringing up the rear. Skirting the edge of the marshlike depression which acted as a holding cup for the upper snows, they at last headed it and caught the ultimate trickle that came in beyond it. This, following the example

ON THE MISSOURI

of their late hostess, they rapidly ascended, until at last, by a clump of dark balsam trees, high up toward the white top of Jefferson, where a light snow had fallen not long before, even in the summertime, they picked out the dark rock from under which a tiny thread of water, icy cold and sufficiently continuous to be called perennial, issued and began its way to a definite and permanent channel.

Without any comment, each one of the party, almost unconsciously, removed his hat. A feeling almost of awe fell upon them as they stood in that wild, remote, silent and sheltered spot, unknown and unnoted of the busy world, which now they knew was the very head spring of the greatest waterway of all the world.

"Shun!" barked Uncle Dick. The three boys fell into line, heels together, in the position of the soldier, Billy following suit. Uncle Dick drew from his pocket a tiny, folded flag, no more than four or five inches in its longest dimension, and pinned it on a twig which he placed upright at the side of the spring.

"Colors!" Sharply Uncle Dick's hand swept to his eyes, in the army salute. And the hand of every one of the others followed. Then, with swung hat, Rob led them with the Scouts' cheer.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Let's look for the Culver plate now!" exclaimed Jesse, and scrambled on hands and knees. Indeed, he did unearth the rusted fragments of what might have been the original record plate, but small trace now remained of any inscription. With some pride he next drew out from his shirt front a plate which he himself had concealed thus long, brought for a purpose of like sort to that of the rusted remnant they now had found. But his Uncle Dick gently restrained him.

"No, better not, son," said he. "You and I have done very little. We have discovered nothing at all, except one Indian arrowhead a hundred miles north of here. To leave our names here now would only be egotism, and that's not what we want to show. Reverence is what we want to show, for this place that was here before Thomas Jefferson was born, and will be here unchanged after the last President of the United States shall have passed on.

"Let old Mount Jefferson have his own secret still for his own—see how he wipes out all traces of human beings, steadily and surely!

"In all their great journey across, Meriwether Lewis did not once write his name on rock or tree. Will Clark wrote his twice—once on Pompey's Pillar, on the Yellowstone,

ON THE MISSOURI

and once on the rock far down in Nebraska, as we noted when we passed near that place. But the simplicity, the modesty of those two, sinking everything in their great duty to their country—it's those things, my boys, which make their *Journal* the model of its kind and class, and their journey the greatest of its kind in all the history of the world.

"Now hats off to Captain Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark of the army! Had they come where we are now, they would not have reached the Columbia. In courage, good sense, and modesty, the first and best."

They did salute, once more and in silence. But Uncle Dick put a hand on Jesse's shoulder as he saw tears in his eyes.

"It's all right, son," said he. "Don't mind, but don't forget. Good men come and go; it's good deeds that live. Now, we're by no means first at this spot, and it's of no vast consequence now. We'll even let our little flag flutter here alone, till the snows come, and the slides give it its evening gun."

They turned back down the edge of the depression in the mountain top, and by deep dusk once more were at the horse camp, where Billy quickly went to work to find grass and wood. All bore a hand. They got up all the dry wood

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

they could find, cut stakes for a back log pile of green logs, spread the half of a quilt back of their slim bed, and so prepared to pass a night which they found very long and cold. Their supper now was cooked, and before the small but efficient fire they now could complete the labors of their own day—each boy with his notes, and John with the map which he always brought up each day at least in sketch outline.

“I don’t know just how many people ever have been in here,” said Billy, after a time. “Not so very many, sure, for nearly all try to get up the cañon. I heard that a man and his wife once climbed up the cañon, but I doubt that. There’s Bill Bowers, from the head of Henry’s Lake, he’s been up to the top, but I don’t know just how far—he said you couldn’t follow the cañon all the way. I don’t doubt that prospectors and hunters have been across here, and the Ban-nacks hunted these mountains for sheep, many a year. Used to be great bighorn country, and of course, if this country never was known by anybody, the bighorns would still be here. There’s stories that there’s a few in back, but I don’t believe it. You can ride up the south slope of Sawtelle Mountain, in the timber, al-

ON THE MISSOURI

most to the top, and almost this high. I guess she's been traveled over, all right, by now. Only, they couldn't carry off the old river. If they could, I guess they'd have done that, too."

That night the stars came out astonishingly brilliant and large. The silence of the great hills was unbroken even by a coyote's howl. To them all, half dozing by their little fire, it did indeed seem they had found their ultimate wilderness, after all.

The chill of morning still was over all the high country when they got astir and began to care for the horses on their picket ropes and to finish the cooking of their remaining food. Then, each now leading his horse, they began to thread their way downhill. Over country where now they had established the general courses, it was easier for such good mountain travelers to pick out a feasible way down. They crossed the cañon at about the same place, but swung off more to the right, and early in the morning were descending a timbered slope which brought them to the edge of the Alaska Basin and the Red Rock road. They now were on perfect footing and not far from the Culver camp, so they took plenty of time.

"The name 'Culver Cañon' did not seem to stick," said Billy, as they marked the gorge

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

where the river debouched, far to their right, now. "I don't know what the surveyors call it—they never have done much over in here but guess at things mostly—but the name 'Hell Roaring Cañon' is the one that I've always heard used for it. It's not much known even now. A few people call it the 'real head of the Missouri,' but nobody in here seems to know much about its history, or to care much about it. They all just say it's a mighty rough cañon, up in. Somehow, too, the place has a bad name for storms. I've heard a rancher say, over east of the pass, on Henry's Lake, that in the winter it got black over in here on Jefferson, and he couldn't sleep at night, sometimes, because of the noise of the storms over in these cañons. Oh, I reckon she's wild, all right.

"Now, below the mouth, you'll see all the names are off. Hell Roaring breaks into four channels just at the mouth, over the wash. Fact is, there's seven channels across the valley, in all, but four creeks are permanent, and they wander all out yonder, clean across the valley, but come together below, above the upper lake; and that's the head of the Red Rock, which ought to be called the Missouri by rights.

"And you ought to have seen the grayling once, in all these branches!" he added. "No

ON THE MISSOURI

finer fishing ever was in the world. The water's as bright as glass, fast and clean, and not too deep to wade, with bends and willow coves on below—loveliest creeks you ever saw. Then, over across, is a creek where Jim Blair, a rancher, planted regular brook trout, years ago. They get to a half pound, three quarters, and take the fly like gentlemen. But all this country's shot to pieces now—automobiles everywhere, and all sorts of men who kill the last fish they can."

"But have they got them all?" asked Rob. "It would be easy planting and keeping up such waters as these."

"Sure it would. Well, maybe some day folks'll learn that the old times in their country are gone. We act like they wasn't, but that's because we've got no sense—don't know our history.

"Now," he added, as they forded one bright, merry stream that crossed their way, "you all ride down the road to where the bridge is—that's the main stream again, and she's pretty big—regular river, all right. Wait for me there at the bridge. I'll see if I can pick out a fish or so. I see a dry quaking asp lying here that some fellow has left, and I'll just try it myself. You know, get a quaking-asp pole

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

that's dry and hasn't been dead too long, it's the lightest and springiest natural fishing rod that grows. The tip is strong enough, if it hasn't rotted, and she handles almost as good as a boughten rod. Now Rob, you lead my horse on down, and I'll try it along the willows with a 'hopper.'"

"Oh, let me go along, too!" exclaimed Jesse. "Lead my horse, John?"

"All right," said John. "Good luck."

At the bridge, a half mile below, the three remaining members of the party picketed the horses on a pleasant grass plat near the road. Rob went exploring for a little way, then, without saying anything, began to get together some dry wood for a fire, and also began cutting some short willow twigs which he sharpened at each end.

"The 'old way,' Rob?" said John, smiling.

"Yes," nodded Uncle Dick. "Rob has seen what I have seen—there's trout in this water, and grayling, too. Do you see that grayling between the bridge there, over the white bar? I've been watching him rise. So, by the time we get a broiling fire, maybe Rob'll have need for his skewers—to hold a fish flat for broiling before a fire, in the 'old way' we learned in the far North. Eh, Rob?"

ON THE MISSOURI

"That's the way I figured it, sir," replied Rob, smiling. "Billy'll get something on hoppers, at this season, for that's what the trout and grayling are feeding on, right now."

Sure enough, in not much over a half hour, Billy and Jesse met them at the bridge, with five fine fish—two grayling and three trout—Jesse very much excited.

"All you have to do is just to sneak up and drop a hopper right in the deep water at the bends, and they nail it!" said he. "Billy showed me. He always carries a few hooks and a line in his vest pocket, he told me. Fish all through this country!"

It took the boys but a few minutes to split the fish down the back and skewer them flat, without scaling them at all. Then they hung them before the fire, flesh side to the flame, and soon they were sizzling in their own fat.

"Now, you can't put them on a plate, Billy!" said Jesse, as Billy began searching in the pack. "Just some salt—that's all. You have to eat it right off the skin, you know."

"Well, that ain't no way to eat," grumbled Billy. "It's awful mussy-looking, to my way of thinking."

"Try it," said Uncle Dick, whittling himself a little fork out of a willow branch. And very

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

soon Billy also was a believer that the 'old way' of the Arctic Indians is about the best way to cook a fish.

Now, having appeased their hunger, they saddled again and made their way slowly to the ranch of Mrs. Culver at the Picnic Spring, as the place was called—in time for Jesse and John each to catch a brace of great trout before dusk had come.

They now were all willing to vote their experience of the past two days to be about the pleasantest and most satisfying of any of the trip, which now they felt had drawn to a natural close. That evening they all, including their sprightly hostess, bent late over the table, covered with maps and books.

"I surely will be sorry to see you leave," said the quaint little woman of the high country. "It's not often I see many who know any history of the big river, or who care for it. But now I can see that you all surely do. You know it, and you love it, too."

"If you know it well, you can't well help loving it, I reckon," said Billy Williams.

CHAPTER XXX

SPORTING PLANS

"LET'S see, Rob—what day of the month is this?" began John, the following morning, when, their bills for the horses and themselves all discharged and their motor car purring at the gate, they bade farewell to their interesting friend and prepared to head eastward once more.

"Well," said Rob, "we were at the Three Forks on July 27th, and we spent a week getting to the Shoshoni Cove—that's August 4th; and we left on August 5th, and got to Monida August 6th, and came here that day; and day before yesterday was the 7th, and we came down the mountain yesterday, the 8th; this must be about August 9th, I suppose."

"That's right," said Uncle Dick; "giving us a full week or even more if we want it, to explore the Madison Fork, which is another head of the big river. Then we'll wind up on the Gallatin head, at Billy's place, and figure there what we want to do next. We might well stop at the head of Henry's Lake, and in a day

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

or so we'll pick up Billy's car there and be on our way, with a camp outfit of our own again."

Their journey over the clean, hard road around the rim of the wide Alaska Basin was one of delight. They sped down the farther slope of the Red Rock Pass, along the bright waters of Duck Creek, until early in the afternoon they raised the wide and pleasing view of Henry's Lake, one of the most beautiful valleys of the Rockies. Around this the road led them comfortably enough to the cluster of log cabins and tents which was now to make their next stopping place. Here they sent back the Monida car, whose driver said he could make the Picnic Creek camp by nightfall if he drove hard. Soon they all were made comfortable in the cabins of this "dude ranch," as the Western people call any place where tourists are taken in for pay.

The proprietor of this place was an old-time settler who could remember the days of buffalo and beaver in this country, and who told them marvelous tales of the enormous number of trout in the lake.

"Go down to the landing, below the tamarack swamp," said he, "and get a boat and just push out over the moss a little way. Off to the right you'll see a stake sticking up in the water. Drop

ON THE MISSOURI

your anchor a little way from it and cast that way; it marks a spring, or cold hole, and they lie in there."

The three boys did as advised, and to their great surprise began to catch trout after trout as they cast their flies toward the indicated spot. They all were about the same size, just under two pounds, all native or cutthroat trout. They soon tired of it, and returned nearly all of their catch to the water as soon as taken. Sometimes a fish, tired with the struggle, would lie at the bottom, on its side, as though dead, but if touched with the end of the landing-net handle would recover and swiftly dart away.

"From all I learn," said Rob, "this fishing is too easy to be called sport—they lie in all the spring holes and creek mouths. This is the head of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River, and a great spawning ground. Now, you want to remember you're not on Missouri waters, but Pacific waters. If Lewis and Clark had come over that shallow gap yonder—the Reynolds Pass, which cuts off the Madison Valley—they'd have been on one of the true heads of the Columbia. But they probably never would have got through, that year, at least."

The young anglers found that their catch of trout created no enthusiasm at the camp. The

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

cook told them that he didn't care for these trout very much, because you had to soak them overnight in salt and water to make them fit to eat, they tasted so muddy in the summertime. So they said they would not fish any more at that place.

That evening as they sat about their table engaged with their maps and notebooks, they were joined by Jim, the son of the rancher, a young man still in the half uniform of the returned soldier, with whom they all rapidly made friends, the more so since he proved very well posted in the geography of that part of the country. He readily agreed to take the young explorers on a trip over the Raynolds Pass on the following morning, so that they might get a better idea of the exact situation of the Madison River.

They made an early start, leaving their uncle Dick and Billy Williams at the ranch to employ themselves as they liked. It was a drive of only a few miles from the northern end of Henry's Lake, along a very good road, to the crest of the gentle elevation which lay to the northward. The young ranchman pulled up the car at last and pointed to an iron plug driven down into the ground.

"Here's the Divide," said he. "You now are

ON THE MISSOURI

on top of the Rocky Mountains, although it doesn't look like it."

"Why," said Jesse, "this looks like almost any sort of prairie country. We have been in lots of places higher than this."

"Yes," said his new friend, "you can see lots of places higher than this any way you look. She's only six thousand nine hundred and eleven feet here. There are snow-topped mountains on every side of you. Where we are right now is the upper line of the state of Idaho. Idaho sticks up in here in a sort of pocket—swings up to the north and then back again. The crest of the Divide is what makes the state line between Montana and Idaho. Four feet that way we are on Idaho ground, but there's Montana east of us, north of us, and west of us.

"Over southwest, where you came over the Red Rock Pass, is the head of the Missouri. On north of here is the Madison River; it comes in, running northwest out of the upper corner of Yellowstone Park. We could drive down there in a little while to the mouth of the West Fork, but I think we can get better fishing somewhere else.

"If we went on, an hour or so, we would come to the mouth of the Madison Cañon. Up toward the head of that is the big power dam—

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

ninety feet high it is—which cuts off the big Madison, and the South Fork, too. That makes a lake that runs over back into the country. They say it is seventy miles or so around the shore line, I don't know just how far. That place is full of big fish, and when you catch it just right, there is great sport there. I don't call it sport to fish for trout under that big dam. They jump and jump there, day after day, until they wear themselves out. There ought to be a ladder in that dam, but there isn't."

"I suppose here is where the road comes down from Three Forks, over this Raynold's Pass," said John, with pencil in hand, ready to continue his own personal map of the country.

"No, not exactly," continued the young ranchman. "This road runs up to Virginia City. They tell me that between there and Three Forks the roads are hard to get over."

"But they come down here from Butte, don't they?" inquired Rob. "I thought this was right on the Butte road."

"No, the best road to Butte comes in over Red Rock Pass just exactly where you came in yourselves. Only it runs along to the north side of the Centennial Valley and not on the south side, where you came in. They have to

ON THE MISSOURI

follow up the Red Rock Valley to Dillon, where it comes in from the north. That's the quickest and easiest way to get between Butte and Henry's Lake. It is something over a hundred miles."

"Well, anyway," argued John, "this is the way Billy Williams will have his car come in from Bozeman."

"No," smiled the young man, "you are wrong again on that. The Bozeman road cannot come down the Gallatin, and through to here, south of the Three Forks. When we come over to the edge of Yellowstone Park I will show you how the road runs to Bozeman. It angles in north, to the east of the South Fork of the Madison. Then it crosses the main river and swings off to the northeast, and then north up to Bozeman, in the valley of the Gallatin River."

"Well," said Rob, turning to his younger associates, "that seems to give us a pretty good look in at this whole proposition of the Missouri River. We have been on the head of the Jefferson Fork; we are going fishing on the South Fork of the Madison and motor to the head of the North Fork, inside of Yellowstone Park, if we wanted to; and then we are going on up to the Gallatin and maybe east on that

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

to its head in the Bozeman Pass. In that way we would be covering all three of the great tributaries."

"Yes, and be having some pretty good sport besides," said the young ranchman. "I will promise you, if you don't like this lake fishing—I don't much care for it myself—we will make up a party and go over and camp out on the South Fork of the Madison as soon as your car comes in from Bozeman. I will take my car over, too, and we'll pick up a young chap about your age, Mr. Rob, at one of the ranches below. His name is Chester Ellicott, and he's descended from the Andrew Ellicott of Pennsylvania, who taught astronomy to Meriwether Lewis.

"Then we can spend a couple of days or so over there on what I think is the finest fishing river in the world. You will still be right on your road to Bozeman and the Gallatin, because you will then be only about six or eight miles from the town of Yellowstone, and near where the Bozeman road comes in."

"That certainly does sound mighty good to me," said Jesse. "I haven't caught a fish now for a couple of days, except those we caught at the lake this afternoon. There were so many of them, it was too easy."

ON THE MISSOURI

"Well," said their new companion, "you won't find catching grayling on the South Fork quite so easy as all that. I always liked stream fishing myself better than lake fishing."

"Do we wade over there, in that stream?" asked Rob. "We haven't got our waders along, ourselves, not even rubber boots."

"We'll fix you up somehow at the place," responded the other. "My friends in here have all got waders. You could fish from the banks, but it is better to have waders, so you can cross once in a while. There are holes in there ten or fifteen feet deep, and I will show you two or three hundred grayling and white fish on the bottom of some of those holes. The water is clear as air, and just about as cold as ice. You couldn't have come at a better time for fishing, because the grasshoppers are on now and even the whitefish are feeding on the surface."

"I wish Billy's man would hurry up with the car," complained Jesse. "He said to be down here in about a week. We might have to wait an extra day."

"Well, out here," smiled his new-found friend, "we don't mind waiting a day or so, but I suppose you folks from back in the East get in more of a hurry. Anyhow, we will promise you a good time."

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

They now returned to the ranch house at the head of Henry's Lake, without going on to the Madison River below the mouth of the cañon, where the young rancher thought the fishing would not be so much worth while. To their great surprise, they found yet another car waiting for them at the camp—none less than Billy Williams's car, with all their camp outfit. This had been brought down from Bozeman by Con O'Brien, one of Billy's neighbors in the Gallatin, as they learned when they had had time to make inquiries.

"Well, that's what I call fast work!" said John, after they had shaken hands all round. "Here's our bed rolls and everything, all waiting for us! Yet we have been two hundred miles from them on one side of the circle, and they've been around two or three hundred miles on the other side."

"Well, the pack train came in from Dillon early yesterday morning," said Con, "and I already had Billy's message. So I just unpacked old Sleepy and Nigger, threw the stuff in the car, and hit the trail south."

"But how did you get here so soon?" demanded Rob. "It must be a good deal over a hundred miles."

"You don't know our mountain roads in this

ON THE MISSOURI

country," smiled Con. "Besides, it is only about ninety miles from Bozeman, the way we figure it. Anyhow, here we are and ready for any sort of frolic you want to name. If I had started a little earlier, I would have been in here last night. But I was fixing up a tire at Yellowstone, so I just thought I would sleep there last night and come out in the morning early."

"What shall we do, young gentlemen," asked Uncle Dick. "The day is still young."

"Well," said Rob, "I am for heading right back to the South Fork of the Madison and going into camp there for the rest of the trip—that is, until we have to start up to Billy's ranch."

They all agreed to this, and accordingly after they had finished their luncheon, they said good-by to the obliging ranchman, whose son, as he had promised, now accompanied them in his own car. In the course of an hour they had picked up the latter's friend from his ranch at the foot of the Lake and soon were speeding rapidly eastward over the Targhee Pass—once more leaving Idaho and going into the state of Montana; a proposition which they now from their maps could easily understand. They traced out carefully the great southward

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

swing of the Continental Divide which comes through the Yellowstone Park, bends around over to the south, thence swings north and west, making the great mountain pocket which holds all the headwaters of the Missouri River.

Both cars halted at the summit of a hill before they swung down into the valley of the South Fork. The view which lay before them was one of extreme beauty. The sky was very clear and blue, with countless clean white clouds. Over to the left rose great ragged mountain peaks, on some of which snow still was to be seen. On ahead stretched the road leading into Yellowstone Park. On the further side of the valley, where the winding willow growth showed the course of the stream, rose a black forest ridge stretching indefinitely eastward toward the waters of the main Madison.

Not even Uncle Dick, experienced traveler that he was, could suppress an exclamation of surprise at the beauty of the scene.

"I never get tired of it. Do you, Chet?" said young Bowers to his ranch friend. The latter only smiled.

"It used to be a great beaver country, of course," went on the former. "All through here the elk come down even yet, though not

ON THE MISSOURI

so many as there used to be. The big fall migration that came down the Madison and Grayling Creek used to come out the northwest corner of the Park more than it does now. I have seen lots of grouse all through here, and if you could wait until the season opened we would have some fun, for I have a fine old dog. But since game is getting scarcer now, maybe we had better just content ourselves with the fishing. I promise you good sport—if you know how to cast a fly.”

“And I’ll promise you they do,” said Uncle Dick, smiling.

The two young local anglers looked at them politely, but said nothing.

CHAPTER XXXI

AMONG THE GRAYLING

TURNING at a point upon the further side of the valley, where the road forked off for the Yellowstone Park, the two cars passed on to the northward, through two or three gates of wire fences inclosing a ranch that lay in the valley. They found the ranchman himself at home, and most courteous and obliging. He insisted they should camp near his house and stay as long as they liked, where they could get chickens, butter, and eggs without any inconvenience.

"I post my land," said he, "to keep off the general public, who soon would ruin all the fishing here as they have almost everywhere else, but I have no desire to keep off decent fishermen like yourselves; and I know the young men who are with you now.

"You are just in time for the evening rise. I was over and picked out a couple for breakfast just now. If I were in your place I would go straight across and then work up the stream a little way, to some big holes you will see,

ON THE MISSOURI

then you can fish on down about as far as you like. By being careful at the crossings, some of you can keep to the stream pretty much all the time, but you can fish from the bank if you are patient. Toward dusk there will be fish enough rising from almost any one hole to give you all the fishing you will like.

"I think you will find a very small gray hackle will be good. Sometimes they take the Professor. Just the other day a man came down here with a little Silver Doctor fly, and they couldn't keep away from it. Sometimes they take Queen of the Waters—dressed long, like a grasshopper—in the bright time of the day. If they take little flies in the evening, then you use little flies, too. There are certainly plenty of the grayling there."

On any stream but this the number of rods now present would have spoiled the sport for some one, but so extensive was the good fishing water that there was room enough for all six of those who intended to fish—Billy said he would go along and carry the basket for Jesse, and Con O'Brien laughed at the idea of fishing, as he had already had so much that summer; so he went with Uncle Dick. They broke into three parties, one each of the men going along with one of the young anglers, although

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

Chet and his friend were so used to the stream that they needed no advice. These two for a time did not fish at all, but showed the newcomers how and where the sport would be found.

The prediction of the rancher was more than verified. The day had been warm, and now, as the cool of the evening came, the grayling began to rise. At the heads of the bluffs where the current swept in they could be seen breaking almost continually, taking in some small floating insects. Inside of a few minutes each of the anglers was fast to a fine fish; and after that one strike after another followed fast and furious.

"You will have to be careful, son," said Billy Williams to Jesse, who had raised three fine grayling and lost them all. "The mouth of a grayling is very tender. You can't fight him as hard as you can a trout. Let him run. When he gets that big black fin up crossways of the stream he pulls like a ton. After a while he will begin to go deep; then you want to lift him gently all the time, until in a few minutes you can get the net under him. I would rather fish grayling than trout, although some think trout fishing is more fun.

"Now look at that fellow jumping over there

ON THE MISSOURI

under the bushes. He's rising right in the same place. You walk around there at that little sand bar, and float your fly right over him and see what happens."

Jesse did as instructed, Billy following a little distance behind him. Whipping his fly backward and forward a few times to dry it well, Jesse, who was really a good fisherman for his years, managed to land the fly just short of the bushes, so that it floated down directly over the rising fish.

There came a sudden splash and an excited shout from Jesse. "I've got him!" exclaimed he.

"Maybe so," said Billy. "You had them other three, too, but you didn't get them in the basket. Now you go easy, young man, and put this one where I can get my hands on him."

Thus warned, Jesse played the fish gently and carefully, allowing it to run down into the deep water, but keeping his rod tip up all the time and giving line when the fish surged too hard with the current. After several minutes of careful work Billy waded in knee deep and slipped the landing net under the fish—a beautiful specimen, of a pound and a half, clean, fat, and very beautiful with its great spotted fin.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"There you are, son," said he. "That's your first grayling, isn't it?"

"It's my first one of this sort," said Jesse, bending over the fish. "You know, I didn't catch either of those over on the Red Rock. Of course, I have caught them up North on the Bell River, on the Arctic Circle, but they are a deep-blue color up there and this fish is white, or, anyhow, gray. He is just the same shape as far as I can see."

"Well, get back at your work now," said Billy. "This is the only grayling stream left in the West. You are on it at the right time of the year and the right time of the day. Ten years from now may be too late. So catch a few—but not too many."

"You needn't fear," said Jesse. "If either of us boys brought in more than half a dozen, Uncle Dick would give us a good calling down."

"Well, that's right enough, too," said Billy. "The state limit is twenty pounds a day, but that's too high. If everybody got twenty pounds they would soon all be gone. Yet on the spawning run above, on the stream up here, I have seen fellows stand on the bank and snake out strings of them as long as a long willow would hold. I have known one man to

ON THE MISSOURI

say he had caught ninety grayling out of one hole. Well, that's where they go."

They wandered along slowly in the late afternoon, passing around one willow plant to the next, usually fishing at some place where the grassy meadow ran clean to the bank of the stream. They did not lack in sport, and before long Jesse had a half dozen fine fish in his basket; then, sighing, he said regretfully he thought he ought not to fish any longer.

"I will not urge you to," said Billy Williams. "'Most anybody else would. But if you have got enough, let's go back to camp. We have got to feed ourselves, of course, and give plenty to the ranchman if he will take them; he may have friends to whom he would like to send a mess."

At dusk that evening they all gathered around their little camp fire, which they had built not very far from the hospitable ranchman's house, in acceptance of his kind invitation. Soon Billy and Cón had grayling frying, with enough and to spare for all, since Rob had taken a half dozen fish, Uncle Dick as many, and John had come in with seven—one of them rather small, as he explained it. The two young ranchmen had baskets equally heavy, for, as they explained, they had neigh-

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

bors who did not like to eat the Henry's Lake trout, but preferred grayling, so they thought it wise to take some home with them.

"Well I did go a little light on the fishing, fellows," said Uncle Dick, "because I want you to stay here one more day before we start out for Bozeman. That means two nights in camp, which will bring us into Bozeman just past the middle of the month, with our summer's job pretty well whipped."

"Which way are we going from Billy's, Uncle Dick?" demanded Jesse, with his usual curiosity.

"Not yet decided," replied the other. "Wait until we get up there. We still have a little work to do in studying out the return trip of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark in the summer of 1806."

That night they had what John called a map party on the table in the friendly ranchman's home. He and the two young Westerners joined them all in examining the maps and the the great river from St. Louis.

"That's something of a journey, I should say!" commented the ranchman. "I'll warrant you have learned a good many things you did not know before. Some things in here I didn't know before, myself."

ON THE MISSOURI

"It's much pleasanter," said Rob, "to follow out a country on the ground than it is to do it on the map. Not all maps are correct—except John's, here! But no matter how good a map is, it never means anything to you until you have followed it out on the ground. Just look here, for instance, at the great crooked sweep of the Continental Divide. Yet here we have crossed three passes over the Continental Divide within the last three days—Red Rock, Reynolds, and Targhee—and the Targhee divides the Madison, which is Atlantic water, from Henry's Lake, which is Pacific water."

"Yes," nodded Uncle Dick. "There are not many more interesting countries, geographically speaking, than this right where we are, at the head of the great river. Lewis and Clark crossed the Rocky Mountain Divide seven times, at six different places—up North there. They crossed the Lemhi Pass, both of them. Then they crossed the Divide twice more into the Bitter Roots, then crossed it again on the Lolo Trail. Then they came back over that when they went East, and Lewis crossed the pass over to the north, alone, and that ought to be called his pass. And Clark came down to the Gallatin and crossed that pass alone to the Yellowstone waters. Yet their

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

names are on almost none of the great passes and great rivers which they found. Soon they will have passed."

One more day of beautiful sport on the crystal stream that ran through the beautiful valley, and the pleasant party of new-made friends met around the camp fire for the last time.

"I have got to get back for my haying," said Chet, who had proved himself a fine angler as well as a good companion.

"The same for me," added the young rancher from the head of the lake. So it was agreed that on the next morning they should separate.

CHAPTER XXXII

AT BILLY'S RANCH

THE blue smoke of their last camp fire on the South Fork rose almost straight in the still air of a clear summer day as their party sat around their last breakfast. Although not actually at the end of their journey, they felt that now they were heading away from these interesting scenes, so that a sort of sadness fell upon them.

"Cheer up, fellows!" said Billy Williams. "You are not out of scenery, nor out of sport yet, by any means, if you want to stop for sport. Besides, there is one other thing we haven't finished yet," he added turning to Uncle Dick.

"Feel in your right-hand waistcoat pocket, Jesse," said the latter.

Jesse did so with a smile and produced the black, glassy-looking arrowhead which he had found at the Beaverhead Rock over to the northward, many days before.

"We are a few miles west of the Yellowstone Park here," said Uncle Dick. "We will have

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

quite a party in our car with all the luggage, but they are used to seeing cars in the Park with bundles tied all over the running boards. Now I move you that we go over to Yellowstone and go into the Park as far as the forks of the Gibbon and the Madison, and leave our stuff there for our camp, with Con to take charge of it and make camp. Then we can go on up the Gibbon and on to the Beaver Meadows, where the great black cliff is that is known through all this country as the Obsidian Cliff. I shall show you there, Jesse, the whole face of a mountain of this same black glass, as you call it. And that mountain, as sure as you live, was known by all the Indians for hundreds of miles around here. It was just like the great Red Pipestone quarries of Minnesota.

“Now you begin to see something about exploring and getting across country. You found that arrowhead on the hunting ground of the Shoshonis and the Bannacks. Those people hunted clear down across the lower end of what is now Montana, down the Red Rock River, the way we came by rail; and over the Raynolds Pass, where you boys were; and over the Targhee Pass, and up the Madison and the Gibbon, to this place where they get the heads for their arrows.

ON THE MISSOURI

“How did they know? Who found it first? Nobody can answer those questions. But one great truth about white explorations on this Continent you must know—there was not one great pass, not one great river, not one great natural scenic feature, which was not known to one or more Indian tribes centuries before the white men came. So after all, we as explorers are not so much. Frémont was not much of an explorer, much as you reverence him. Even Lewis and Clark had been preceded in all this country by the Indian girl and her people. And those people had been every place that we have been—and even as far as Yellowstone Park and into its interior as far as the Obsidian Cliff. There is no doubt or question about that, although it is quite true that obsidian was found in other volcanic regions of different parts of the West.

“Jesse, your arrowhead has been a long way from home! Are you going to take it back? Has it served its purpose in teaching you something about your own country?”

Jesse sat silent for a time, then, “Uncle Dick,” said he, at last, “I am going to take my arrowhead back. When we get to that rock you tell about, I am going to put it down right

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

at the foot, just the way it is, with other pieces like those the Indians took away."

"Good!" said Uncle Dick. "The little sentiment won't hurt you, anyhow. I suppose your arrowhead will remain there undiscovered for a thousand years. The tourists who come there now in their touring cars look at that black-faced rock about half a second and whiz by. They want to make the next lunch station."

"That's no lie," said Billy Williams. "Folks nowadays don't know how to travel."

They concluded their packing arrangements, rolling their bed rolls tight and storing them along the hood of the car and on the running boards, where Con had fixed up a little rack to carry the extra baggage. Saying good-by to their hospitable friends, the two parties now separated.

Without incident the journey of that day was completed as outlined by their leader, and that night they spread their tent in a public camping ground on the banks of the Madison River, in sight of twenty other tents besides their own.

"Nothing much here of interest," said Uncle Dick, "except yonder mountains. The Madison here is a beautiful stream, but fished to death. That mountain is not much changed."

ON THE MISSOURI

"What about it?" said Rob, curiously.

"That's National Park Mountain. We are camping now precisely where the Hayden, Doane, and Langford exploring party camped when they were going out in 1871 after finishing the first exploration of Yellowstone Park. It was right here, at this camping place, that Cornelius Hedges, one of their number, proposed the establishment of the Yellowstone Park, so that all of this wonderland should be preserved forever."

"Well, said Rob, drawing a long breath, "we are getting into some history now around here!"

But they talked no more history at the time, for by now all were weary with the journey. As early as the next their camp fire was alight the following morning. Billy took Jesse up to Gibbon and across to the Obsidian Cliff, where he carried out his intention, and hid his obsidian arrowhead at the foot of the great rock. "There!" said he, "I'll bet, if anybody finds it, he'll wonder who made it!"

Soon they were on their way back to Yellowstone Station on the Bozeman road. Following it out, under Con O'Brien's steady driving, and asking a hundred questions of Billy en route, they finally swept down late in the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

evening into the beautiful valley of the Gallatin. Winding among the farms, they pulled up at last at Billy Williams's comfortable ranch house and soon were made at home.

"Here we are, fellows, east of the Three Forks of the Missouri," said Uncle Dick, when they had gotten out their maps for that evening's study. "At first, neither Lewis nor Clark followed the Gallatin at all. As we know, Clark went but a short distance up the Madison. But when the explorers were going east, as we saw before, Clark came down to the Shoshoni Cove, at the junction where we made our lost camp, over west. When he struck in here, on the Gallatin, Clark had with him the Indian girl, Sacágawea. Besides the Indian woman and her child, he had eleven men and fifty horses. Ordway, as we have seen, had taken nine men and started downstream with the boats. No one knew this country except the Indian girl.

"Yes, and she must have been across here before, too," said Billy. "There are three passes at the head of the East Gallatin—the Bozeman and the Bridger and the Flathead. The Indian girl told them to take the one farthest south, which is Bozeman Pass.

"The books say that on July 13th Clark

ON THE MISSOURI

camped just where the town of Logan is, in the Gallatin Valley. They say he followed southeast from there and crossed Bozeman Creek near this town. The Indian girl knew there was a buffalo road there, and they stuck to that. Good authorities think that they camped, July 14th, near where old Fort Ellis afterward was located. That's across the East Gallatin. There is an easy pass there, and there is no doubt at all that the Indian girl led Clark through that easiest pass, which the Indians would be sure to find when going between their hunting ranges.

"Of course, old man Bozeman did not come in here until the mining strikes, 1863 or 1864. He was a freighter and knew this country, although he didn't know it well enough to keep from getting killed by the Indians."

"Up the Gallatin, too," went on Billy, "is where they say John Colter ran after he got away from the Blackfeet. He didn't have any clothes on to speak of even then—he sure traveled light. But, anyhow, he lived to discover Yellowstone Park, or part of it, and to tell a lot of stories which everybody said were lies."

"Can we see much of the trail, if we go over with the pack train?" asked Rob.

"Not so very much," said Billy. "Even the

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

old road is wiped out, now that the railroad has come. In some places you can find where the trail once ran, or is supposed to have run, but you have to go by the general landmarks now.

"When you come to the central ridge beyond old Ellis, you get the last summit between here and Yellowstone waters. The tunnel runs under that now. The railroad books say that is fifty-five hundred and sixty-five feet—the highest of the three northern transcontinental passes."

"So you can figure now, I reckon," he concluded, "that you are mighty near at the head of the Gallatin, a day's march from here. And if you want to, you can take the railroad in town, all the way down the Yellowstone and clean on home to Chicago or St. Louis, without getting off the cars."

"Well, since we are so near the end of the trail, young gentlemen," began Uncle Dick, at this point, "what do you say we ought to do?"

"Well, the first thing we ought to do," said John, "before we go home, is not to leave all those people out in the wilderness. We have got Clark and eleven people here on the Gallatin, and Captain Lewis is away up on the Marias, and Gass and Ordway are scattered

ON THE MISSOURI

every which way between here and the Great Falls."

"All right, all right!" rejoined Uncle Dick. "Get out your *Journal* now, and we will see what became of Captain Lewis. We won't follow him day by day, and we will just take up his trail somewhere near Missoula.

"See here, now. He must have crossed what is called Clark's Fork—all of that river, part of which is called Hell Gate River, ought to be called after Clark. He went up the Hell Gate River, without any guides, but he must have struck an Indian trail which led him over east. On the fourth day, that is on July 7th, he reached the pass which is called even now Lewis and Clark's Pass—the only pass named after either of those explorers, although only one of them ever saw it.

"Now, you see, they were opposite the headwaters of the Dearborn River—the same stream where Clark left the boats and went up the river on foot when they were going west the preceding year. They knew where they were when they got here, and felt pretty fairly safe.

"But Lewis wanted to see about that country north of the Great Falls. They were now among the buffalo once more and glad enough

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

to find them. They hunted down the Sun River to their old camp above the Great Falls. Here they made a couple of bull boats, and on July 12th they crossed to the old camp and found the *cache* which they had made there. A good many of the things were spoiled in the *cache*, which they had built too low, so that the high water had flooded it.

"Now they reached their old friends, the white bears, which were just as ferocious as ever. So were the mosquitoes. Lewis dreads these mosquitoes more than anything else.

"Now the *Journal* says that Lewis determined to go up the Marias River. He left McNeal, Thompson and Goodrich, Gass, Frazier and Werner, here at the Falls. He took with him six horses and had along Drewyer and the two Fields boys—about his best hunters. They left Sergeant Gass four horses, so that he could get the boats around the portage as soon as Ordway and the boats came down the Missouri.

"Now I want you to stop and think how these people were making connections, scattered all through this country as they were. On July 19th, here came Ordway and his nine men with the canoes! Then they doubled party again, to portage, and in four days, with the

ON THE MISSOURI

aid of the horses, they got the stuff all below the Falls. Gass and one man swam the horses across the river; Ordway and the others took the canoes. They all reached the mouth of the Marias River July 28th. By that time, of course, Clark was over on the Yellowstone, having crossed the Gallatin Pass from here.

"Now Lewis was on the north side of the river with three men. He knew he was going up into the Blackfeet country, and he must have known something of the reputation of that tribe. But those men would go almost anywhere. Now they were among the buffalo, so they felt safe for food.

"They left the river July 16th, and on July 21st they got into country which you and I can identify—the mouth of Two Medicine Creek, where it meets the Cutbank, both of which rise in Glacier Park. I've had fine fishing up in there.

"Now they pushed on up north up the Cutbank, forded where the Great Northern Railroad is now, and went on five miles beyond that. You see, they were now clear up almost to the northern line of Montana; whereas you and I have seen them almost to the southern line of Montana. And look at all the waterways they had covered!

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"This was Lewis's farthest north. Drewyer found out that there were Indians in that country. Perhaps that accounted for the scarcity of game they now felt. They concluded to turn back down the river, and on July 26th—which is the day Gass and Ordway finished their portage at the Great Falls—they headed southeast for the mouth of the Marias, trusting to Providence they would meet their men there and that they would eventually meet Clark at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

"Now when you come to make all these things tally out on the ground, it is quite a proposition, isn't it?"

The boys all looked at him with open eyes, as they followed out on the map the widely separated journeys of the two great chiefs.

"Very well," resumed Uncle Dick, "they got down a mile below Badger Creek, on the Two Medicine River. Now they had the one and only dangerous encounter with the Indians which any of them met throughout the whole two years' trip. It was at that time hostility of the Blackfeet against the whites began. They ran into a bunch of Indians. There were eight of them, who turned out to be the Minnetarees of the North, whom they knew to be

ON THE MISSOURI

one of the most dangerous bands of all that neighborhood.

"It seemed best to make friends, so they camped with the Indians that night and slept in their tents. Toward morning the Indians made their break—seized the guns of all four of the men and started out to steal the horses.

"J. Fields and his brother started out after one Indian with the rifles. The fellow hung on to them, and R. Fields stabbed the Indian, killing him on the spot. This uproar woke up Drewyer and Lewis, who were in the tepee. Drewyer and Lewis got possession of their rifles. Lewis called to the Indians to stop running off his horses. These savages showed fight, and Lewis shot one of them through the body, which accounted for two of the savages in a few moments.

"In a very little time longer the four white men had all their camp outfit and four horses belonging to the Indians, although they had lost one of their own horses. They had met their first Indian fight, and got out of it rather well.

"Now followed what I suppose was one of the fastest rides ever made on the Western prairies. Lewis and his men mounted and started hotfoot for the mouth of the Marias River. To make the story of it, at least, short,

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

they rode about one hundred and twenty miles in a little over twenty-four hours.

"We have seen that Gass, Ordway, and the other men were coming down from the Falls with the boats. As a matter of fact, they had just rounded the bend, approaching the place where old Fort Benton later was to stand, when Lewis and his men met them. That was what I call good luck, and a whole lot of it! Just look where they had been and what they had been through!

"Well, now, part of our men had got together. Lewis and his companions cut loose their horses on the plains. They all hurried into the canoes and dropped down to the mouth of the Marias. Here they abandoned the rest of their horses. They dug up the *cache* which they had left here in the previous year. This *cache* also was pretty badly damaged, but they got some stuff out of it. Indeed, some of the *caches* were in good condition, although the big red boat they had left was no longer of any use. They stripped her of her iron and set out by canoes, as soon as they could, because by that time they did not know what the Indians would be apt to do to them.

"Now they got down to the mouth of the Milk River on August 4th, and they reached

the mouth of the Yellowstone on August 7th. And there what do you suppose they found? Was Clark there ahead of them, or was Lewis to wait for Clark?"

"I know!" said Jesse. "Clark beat them down. He left a letter for them, didn't he?"

"That's just what he did, and this time he didn't leave it on a green stick for a beaver to carry off, either.

"No, just as if he had stepped to a post-office window and asked for a letter, Lewis found this note awaiting him, telling him Clark had been there for several days and would wait for them a few miles down the river, on the right-hand side. They were at this time making ninety miles a day—one hundred miles on the last day of their travels.

"Now it would seem that Clark was taking a good many chances, because all he had done was to write a note which might have been lost, and to scratch a few words in the sand which might have been washed out. But the luck of Lewis held until August 11th. On that day, as you remember, he was accidentally shot through the hips by one of his men while hunting elk, so that when, on August 12th, he finally overtook Captain Clark, Lewis was lying in his boat, crippled. All through the trip Lewis

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

had had many more dangerous situations and narrow escapes than Clark had.

"In this way, traveling many times faster coming east than they had going west, these two young men, and all of their widely scattered parties, met in this singular reunion, at no place in particular, without ever having had any reason in particular for hoping they ever would meet at all!

"But they did hope. And they did meet. And if you put it to me as an engineer, young gentlemen, I shall say that was the most extraordinary instance of going through unknown country on workmanlike basis I ever heard of in all my life! Nor do I think all the world could produce its like."

They sat in wondering silence for a time, marveling at the perfect ability shown by these young army officers in this formerly wild and unknown country. Uncle Dick closed the pages of his *Journal*, which he had been following through rapidly, and seemed inclined to talk no further.

"You tell it, Billy!" said Jesse, turning to Billy Williams, who had been an attentive listener on the opposite side of the table.

"You mean that I shall bring up the Clark story?"

ON THE MISSOURI

The boys assented to this.

Billy went on, his finger now on the map in turn.

"Take Clark along in here on the Gallatin, near this ranch, say July 15th, about one month ahead of our date now. He is going east with his party. He has got the Indian girl and some horses and some good men. All right. On July 15th he starts across the Divide, heading for the Yellowstone Valley.

"Naturally, he found that plumb easy. He struck into one of the creeks that run down into the Yellowstone. It was only nine miles down that to the Yellowstone River itself, and they hit that just a mile below where it comes out of the Rockies from up yonder in Yellowstone Park, where we all were only yesterday.

"Clark had the easiest end of it, in some ways. He said he had to go only forty-eight miles from the Three Forks to hit the Yellowstone. If he had poled a canoe up the Gallatin, he would not have had to portage over eighteen miles.

"Those are the distances that Clark estimates, but for once he underestimates, I don't know why. Wheeler points out that from Three Forks to Livingston is fifty-four miles, and Clark came down off the Divide at a place

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

just above Livingston. Anyhow, I'll bet he was glad when he saw the old Yellowstone Valley. He had horses now, you see, and he was hitting the trail hard.

"He went down the north side of the Yellowstone, and by July 17th he was down as far as Big Timber and Boulder River. I suppose they would have kept on downstream on horseback, but one of their men, Gibson, got snagged in a fall from his horse, so somewhere near the mouth of the Stillwater they concluded to make some canoes, so that Gibson could ride by boat.

"Now, on July 21st, along comes a nice party of Crows and steals twenty-four of their horses. They hunt a couple of days for the horses, but can't find them—trust the Crows for that! So the canoes are mighty useful. They built two of them twenty-eight feet long and about two feet in the beam and lashed them together, so they had quite a craft.

"On July 24th, about the time Gass and his men were making the portage at the Great Falls, Clark took to the boats, but he put the rest of the horses in charge of Pryor, Shannon, and Windsor.

"So, you see, they were busted up again, half afloat and half on shore, which is always bad.

ON THE MISSOURI

Pryor had it the hardest. He could hardly keep his horses together. But they joined up somewhere near where Billings is to-day. It was plumb easy getting downstream in the boats, for the Yellowstone is lively water, and plenty of it. They could make fifty, sixty, or seventy miles a day, with no trouble at all; but horses can't go that fast.

"On July 25th they got down to a place called Pompey's Pillar, a big rock that sticks up out of the valley floor. Clark cut his name on this rock, which is not so far from the railway station they call Pompey's Pillar to-day. The first engineers of the railroad that came up the valley of the Yellowstone put a double iron screen over Clark's inscription on this rock, drilled in the corner posts and anchored them, so no one could get at the old signature. A lot of other names are there, but I reckon you could still see the name of William Clark, July 25, 1806. It has been photographed, so there is no mistake.

"Now the *Journal* says they got at the mouth of the Big Horn River on July 26th. That, you know, is the place where Manuel Lisa made his trading post in 1807. So now we are beginning to lap over a lot of dates and a lot of things.

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

"Well, the big Custer fight on June 25, 1876, took place not so far from the mouth of the Big Horn River. From the time that Lewis and Clark came through, up to the time of the railroads and the army posts, the Indians had kept getting worse.

"From now on the Clark parties were in the game country, of course. The boats had all the best of it—except for the mosquitoes, of which Clark continually complained. It was the mosquitoes that drove Clark away from the mouth of the Yellowstone, which he reached August 3d.

"He kept going on down the river below the mouth of the Yellowstone, trying to get away from the mosquitoes. When he dodged the mosquitoes he ran into white bears. There was something doing every minute in those days.

"They seemed to have had a trustful way of hoping everything would come out all right, those fellows. Clark did not know where Lewis was, or Ordway, or Gass, or where Pryor and his men were. Well, the Pryor party didn't catch up with Clark until August 8th—and they didn't have a horse to their name!

"You see, three days after they left Clark,

ON THE MISSOURI

near where Billings is, the Indians jumped them once more and stole their last horse. They took a lesson from the Indians and made two bull boats, round ones like the Mandans used. I don't suppose they liked that kind of traveling, but they had to do it. Anyhow, it worked, and hard as it is to believe, they made their way downstream without any serious accident.

"I don't know whether you call all of this good traveling as much as it was good luck, but anyhow they were beginning to pick up their friends. Just look on the map and see how far it is from the mouth of the Big Horn River up across to the mouth of Two Medicine Creek—that's how far Clark and Lewis were apart, and they had been apart for considerable over a month. Lewis might have been killed and no one could have known it had happened, and so might Clark.

"Now they met a couple of white men who were pushing up the river, intending to hunt up the Yellowstone. Colter and his pal go along up the river a little ways, too.

"And now you pick up the Lewis story. Lewis goes down in his boat, crippled. Colter and the other man and the two traders turn back; and pretty soon, on August 12th, they

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

come on Clark's party landed on the shore of the Missouri; fighting mosquitoes!

"Well, it only took them a couple of days from that time to get to the Mandan villages."

"That's where we left our boat, the *Adventurer!*" exclaimed Jesse. "Now what do you say, boys—hasn't this been one exciting finish?"

"But you haven't told us yet, Uncle Dick, what we are going to do," said Rob.

"I'll tell you what to do now," said Uncle Dick. "Go to bed, all of you. In the morning we will make our plans at the breakfast table."

CHAPTER XXXIII

HOMEWARD BOUND

THEY met at the breakfast table where Billy, who kept a bachelor home, had busied himself preparing a final good meal for them. They had abundance of nicely browned trout with fresh eggs, milk, and good bread.

The young travelers ate in silence, with the presentiment that this was their last breakfast on the trail. At length Rob turned to the leader of their party with an inquiring look.

"Well, I'll tell you how I feel, after thinking it over," said Uncle Dick. "I know you hate to say good-by to Sleepy and Nigger, not to mention our friend Billy Williams here, who is as good a mountain man as you are apt to find and who surely has been fine to us.

"But now we are right on a wagon road. There is no excitement in taking a pack train for a couple of days from here over to Livingston. There is not much excitement in taking a train at Bozeman and going over to Livingston and stopping off.

"Of course, we can go back to the junction

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

and take a train to Great Falls, if you want to do that. We have left our two outboard motors over there, not knowing what we might want to do going back. Now we could have those motors shipped over to us here, and we could go down to the Yellowstone in a skiff, no doubt. Or we could go up to Great Falls and buy a boat, and run down the Missouri. We'd make mighty good time either way, by river.

"But I somehow feel that we have brought our men out of the expedition and we have in a way worn the edge off our trip. So what I think we had better do is to call this our last morning in camp with Billy here, hoping we may meet him some other time. We can take our train here, straight through to St. Paul, and transfer there for St. Louis—all by rail. That will put us home about August 20th, or, say, a week longer than three months out from the mouth of the Missouri.

"As you know, Lewis and Clark came down the Missouri in jig time. They left the Mandan villages on August 17th. Here Colter had left them and gone back up the Yellowstone with the two white traders, later to become famous as the first discoverer of the Yellowstone. Here they left Chaboneau, and the game little Indian woman, his wife Sacágawea.

ON THE MISSOURI

"I somehow can't fancy that they ever did enough for that Indian girl. Without her they never would have got across and never would have got back the way they did. She was worth any ten men of the entire party. Well, Lewis and Clark were brief men. Perhaps they did more for her, perhaps they thanked her more, than they have set down in their journals. Knowing them as we ought to, I rather think they did, but they were too shy to say much about it. So there at the Mandans we are obliged to leave some of our party. The others all reached St. Louis about noon on September 23d.

"What they must have left, how they were received is something which we do not need to take up now. At least, they were kept busy by their friends in St. Louis, be sure of that.

"And so closed that story of the two great travelers in whose footsteps we have been traveling this summer, my young friends. They did not claim ever to be heroes. They did their work simply and quietly, with no bluff and no pretense. I don't believe anyone in all the world to-day can realize what those men actually did.

"Perhaps we, who have followed after them, doing in three months as much as we have, can

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

get a little notion of a part of what their journey meant, even skipping as we have. But that they have been sufficiently honored, or that enough of our Americans really understand what they did, I myself never have believed."

Uncle Dick turned away from the table and walked out into the open air, where he was silent for quite a time.

"Give your bed rolls to Billy," said he, at length, to his young friends. "He will take care of those buffalo robes forever. We may need them again, some time, all together. I will telegraph to have the outboard motors sent down to be fitted on our boat, the *Adventurer*, at Mandan. Of course, we could run down the Missouri a hundred or maybe one hundred and fifty miles a day; but as I said to you, that country is getting old now and the edge of our trip is wearing off. We have been dodging towns and farms long enough. Let's get on the train and go straight home!"

And so now, after most reluctant farewells to Billy Williams and Con O'Brien, the young explorers, light of luggage, and, indeed, not heavy of heart, after all, changed their transportation that very day to the "medicine wagons," as the Indians formerly called railway trains, and soon were speeding eastward out

ON THE MISSOURI

of the Rocky Mountains and across the great Plains and Prairies.

At St. Paul they changed for the train to St. Louis. En route they made no further reference to their own journals, and even John had ceased his interminable work on his hand-made maps. The *Journal*, however—that great record of the Lewis and Clark expedition up the Missouri—remained always easily accessible; and just before the termination of their journey Uncle Dick picked it up once more and called his young friends around him.

“We will soon be in St. Louis now,” said he. “Here is where our explorers started out, and here is where they returned. Here is where William Clark did his great work as the first Indian Commissioner. Here is where poor Meriwether Lewis started east, three years after he had finished his great journey, and met his tragic death in the forests of Tennessee. No one will know what that man thought. Perhaps even then he was pondering on the ingratitude of republics.

“But here is one thing which I wish every admirer of Lewis and Clark would read and remember—you can remember it, young friends, if you please. It is what Meriwether Lewis wrote, out there in the mountains near

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

the Continental Divide, when he made up his *Journal* on the evening of his birthday. Write it down, boys, just as he wrote it, ill spelling and all, so that you may see what he was doing and what he was thinking part of the time at least:

"To-day I had the raw hides put in the water in order to cut them in throngs proper for lashing the packages and forming the necessary geer for pack horses, a business which I fortunately had not to learn on this occasion. Drewyer Killed one deer this evening. a beaver was also caught on by one of the party. I had the net arranged and set this evening to catch some trout which we could see in great abundance at the bottom of the river.

"This day I completed my thirty first year, and conceived that I had in all human probability now existed about half the period which I am to remain in this Sublunary world. I reflected that I had as yet done but little, very little, indeed, to further the hapiness of the human race, or to advance the information of the succeeding generation. I viewed with regret the many hours I have spent in indolence, and now soarly feel the want of that information which those hours would have given me had they been judiciously expended. but since they are past and cannot be recalled, I dash from me the gloomy thought, and resolved in future, to redouble my exertions and at least indeavour to promote those two primary objects of human existence, by giving them the aid of that portion of talents which nature and fortune have bestoed on me; or in future, to live for mankind, as I have heretofore lived for myself.

"So there you are, young men," concluded Uncle Dick, rising and reaching for his hat as the train began to near the environs of the busy

ON THE MISSOURI

city. "If you must think of something striking, something worth remembering, out of all the pleasant memories you hold from our little journey this year—you Young Alaskans, now beginning to explore the history of your own wonderful country—set down this picture of Captain Meriwether Lewis, thirty-one years old, with more responsibilities, more of consequences, more future, on his shoulders right then than any other officer of our army ever had, sitting there by his little fire writing in his notebook the same as you, Rob, and you, Jesse, and you, John, have written in yours—and after that, remember what he wrote. Not so very conceited, was he?

"There were two men who were not thinking of politics nor of personal profit in any way. They did not hunt for advancement, they let that hunt them. They were not working for money; they never had much money, either one of them. They were not working for glory; they never had much glory, either of them; they always lacked the recognition they ought to have had, and they are almost forgotten to-day, as they ought not to be. They did their work because it was there to do, out of a sense of duty; they were content with that.

"So now out of all our travels up to this

THE YOUNG ALASKANS

date, I don't know that there is any experience we've had that will bring us a much bigger lesson than this one. Write it in your notebooks—what Meriwether Lewis wrote in his notebook, that day in the mountains. When you are thirty-one, check back in your notebooks and see if you can write what he could.

“Yes, I hope that you may resolve in future to ‘redouble your exertions.’ I hope you may give a ‘portion of the talents which nature and fortune have bestowed on you,’ for the sake of mankind—for the sake of your country, young gentlemen, and not wholly for the sake of yourselves.”

The train rolled into the great railway station. Wondering onlookers stopped for a moment and turned as they saw three lean, sunbrowned boys stand at attention and give the Scout salute to the older man who turned to them and, smiling, snapped his hand into the regulation salute of the Army.

And so, as Jesse smilingly said, the Company of Volunteers for Northwestern Discovery disbanded for that year.

THE END



